AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

By ALEXANDER GERARD, D.D.
Profeſſor of DIVINITY in the MARISCHAL College of *Aberdeen*.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

By ALEXANDER GERARD, D.D.
Professor of DIVINITY in the MARISCHAL College of *Aberdeen*.

THE SECOND EDITION,
With Corrections and Additions.

TO WHICH ARE ANNEXED,
THREE DISSERTATIONS
On the same SUBJECT,
BY
Mr DE VOLTAIRE,
Mr D'ALEMBERT,
AND
Mr DE MONTESQUIEU.

Omnes tacito quodam sensu, sine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ sint in artibus ac rationibus recta et prava dijudicant. Cic. de Oratore, lib. 3.

EDINBURGH:
Printed for A. MILLAR, *London*; and A. KINCAID and J. BELL, *Edinburgh*.
MDCCLXIV.

BRITISH
MUSEUM

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN EARL OF BUTE,

&c. &c. &c.

CHANCELLOR OF THE MARISCHAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN:

EMINENT FOR

ELEGANCE OF TASTE, AND THE PATRONAGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES:

DISTINGUISHED BY

THE MOST IMPORTANT PUBLIC SERVICES TO HIS KING AND HIS COUNTRY;

WHICH WILL COMMAND THE HIGH ESTEEM, AND ENGAGE THE WARM GRATITUDE, OF LATE POSTERITY:

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY IS,

IN SINCERE EXPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR's SENSE OF HIS LORDSHIP's ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND VIRTUES,

WITH PROFOUND RESPECT,

INSCRIBED BY

HIS LORDSHIP's

MOST OBLIGED,

MOST DEVOTED, AND

MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,

ALEX. GERARD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE EDINBURGH SOCIETY *for the encouragement of arts, ſciences, manufactures, and agriculture, propoſed, in the year* 1755, a gold medal *to* the beſt ESSAY *on* TASTE; *and, not having aſſigned it that year, repeated the propoſal in* 1756. *This determined the author to enter on the following inquiry into the nature of taſte; the general principles of which only he preſented to the Society, ſuſpecting, that the whole might exceed the limits which they had fixed, by requiring an* eſſay. *The judges appointed for that ſubject having been pleaſed to aſſign the premium to him, he is encouraged to offer the whole, as it was at firſt compoſed, to the public.*

Aberdeen, Sept. 28.
1 7 5 8.

ERRATA.

Pag.	lin.	
11.	1.	*note ult. for* Δῖ, *read* Δί
25.	5.	*note ult. for* ἐπίκῦρος, *read* ἐπίκυρος
30.	2.	*note, for* fiet, *read* ſiet
59	26.	*after* preſent, *for a ſemicolon, place a comma.*
93.	10. 11.	*for* conſiderably, *read* conſiderable
166.	2.	*for* alluſion, *read* abuſion
193.	15.	*for* other, *read* another

CONTENTS.

Pag.

Introduction, 1.

PART I.

Taſte reſolved into its ſimple principles.

Sect. Pag.

I. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of novelty*, 3
II. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of ſublimity*, 11
III. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of beauty*, 29
IV. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of imitation*, 47
V. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of harmony*, 57
VI. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of oddity and ridicule*, 63
VII. *Of the ſenſe or taſte of virtue*, 71

PART II.

The formation of taſte by the union and improvement of its ſimple principles.

Sect. Pag.

I. *Of the union of the internal ſenſes, and the aſſiſtance they receive from delicacy of paſſion*, 75
II. *Of the influence of judgment upon taſte*, 85

Sect.

Sect. Pag.
III. *Taſte improveable; by what means; and in what reſpects,* 93
IV. *Of ſenſibility of taſte,* 99
V. *Of refinement of taſte,* 108
VI. *Of correctneſs of taſte,* 125
VII. *Of the due proportion of the principles of taſte,* 138

PART III.

The province and importance of taſte.

Sect. Pag.
I. *How far taſte depends on the imagination,* 148
II. *Of the connexion of taſte with genius,* 168
III. *Of the influence of taſte on criticiſm,* 176
IV. *Of the objects of taſte,* 182
V. *Of the pleaſures of taſte,* 187
VI. *Of the effects of taſte on the character and paſſions,* 190

Mr De Voltaire's Eſſay, 207
Mr D'Alembert's Eſſay, 220
Mr De Monteſquieu's Eſſay, 245

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

A FINE taſte is neither wholly the gift of *nature*, nor wholly the effect of *art*. It derives its origin from certain powers natural to the mind; but theſe powers cannot attain their full perfection, unleſs they be aſſiſted by proper culture. Taſte conſiſts chiefly in the improvement of thoſe principles which are commonly called *the powers of imagination*, and are conſidered by modern philoſophers as *internal* or *reflex ſenſes* *, ſupplying us with finer and more delicate perceptions,

* Mr Hutcheſon was the firſt who conſidered the powers of imagination as ſo many ſenſes. In his *Inquiry concerning beauty and virtue*, and his *Eſſay on the paſſions*, he calls them *internal* ſenſes. In his later works, he terms them *ſubſequent* and *reflex* ſenſes; *ſubſequent*, becauſe they always ſuppoſe ſome previous perception of the objects about which they are employed; thus a perception of harmony preſup-

perceptions, than any which can be properly referred to our external organs. Theſe are reducible to the following principles; the ſenſes of novelty, of ſublimity, of beauty, of imitation, of harmony, of ridicule, and of virtue. With the explication of theſe, we muſt, therefore, begin our inquiry into the nature of *taſte*. We ſhall next endeavour to diſcover, how theſe ſenſes co-operate in forming *taſte*, what other powers of the mind are combined with them in their exertions, what conſtitutes that refinement and perfection of them which we term *good taſte*, and by what means it is obtained. And, laſt of all, we ſhall, by a review of the principles, operation, and ſubjects of *taſte*, determine its genuine rank among our faculties, its proper province, and real importance.

poſes our hearing certain ſounds, and is totally diſtinct from merely hearing them, ſince many who enjoy the external ſenſe of hearing in the greateſt perfection, have no muſical ear; *reflex*, becauſe, in order to their exertion, the mind reflects upon, and takes notice of ſome circumſtance or mode of the object that was perceived, beſides thoſe qualities which offered themſelves to its attention at firſt view. Thus the perception of any object does not give us the pleaſant ſentiment of novelty, till we have reflected on this circumſtance, that we never perceived it formerly. In the following eſſay, the terms *internal ſenſe* and *reflex ſenſe* are uſed promiſcuouſly.

PART

PART I.

Taſte reſolved into its ſimple principles.

SECT. I.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of novelty.

THE mind receives pleaſure or pain, not only from the impulſe of external objects, but alſo from the conſciouſneſs of its own operations and diſpoſitions. When theſe are produced by external objects, the pleaſure or the pain which ariſes immediately from the exertions of the mind, is aſcribed to thoſe things which give occaſion to them. We have a pleaſant ſenſation whenever the mind is in a lively and elevated temper. It attains this temper when it is forced to exert its activity, and put forth its ſtrength, in order to ſurmount any difficulty: and if its efforts prove ſucceſsful, conſciouſneſs of the ſucceſs inſpires new joy. Hence moderate difficulty, ſuch as exerciſes the mind without fatiguing it, is pleaſant, and renders the object by which it is produced agreeable. Even plainneſs and perſpicuity becomes diſpleaſing in an author, when it is carried to exceſs, and leaves no room for exerciſing the reader's

thought: and though great obſcurity diſguſts us, yet we are highly gratified by delicacy of ſentiment, which always includes ſome degree of it, occaſions a ſuſpenſe of thought, and leaves the full meaning to be gueſſed at, and comprehended only on attention*. The exerciſe of thought which moderate difficulty produces, is a principal ſource of the pleaſure

* Some critics have explained this gratification, either by ſuppoſing imaginary refinements of reflection, or by principles which are only conſequences of the pleaſure that attends the moderate exerciſe of thought. Ὀυ πάντα ἐπ' ἀκριβείας δεῖ μακρηγορῶν, ἀλλ' ἔνια καταλιπεῖν, ᾧ τῷ ἀκροατῇ συνιέναι, ᾧ λογίζεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῶ· συνιεὶς γὰρ τὸ ἐλλειφθὲν ὑπὸ σῦ — γίνεται — ἐυμενέστερος· συνετὸς γὰρ ἑαυτῷ δοκεῖ διὰ σὲ, τὴν ἀφορμὴν παρεσχηκότα αὐτῷ τῦ συνιέναι· τὸ δὲ πάντα ὡς ἀνοήτῳ λέγειν, καταγινάσκοντι ἔοικε τῦ ἀκροατῦ. ΔΗΜΗΤ. ΦΑΛ. περὶ ἑρμην. σκδ. σλ. "L'homme "eſt naturellement ſi amoureux de ce qu'il produit, et cette "action de noſtre ame qui contrefait la creation, l'e- "blouit, et la trompe ſi inſenſiblement et ſi doucement, "que les eſprits judicieux obſervent, qu'un des plus "ſeurs moyens de plaire, n'eſt pas tant de dire et de "penſer, comme de faire penſer, et de faire dire. Ne "faiſant qu'ouvrir l'eſprit du lecteur, vous luy donnez "lieu de le faire agir; et il attribuë ce qu'il penſe et "ce qu'il produit à un effet de ſon génie et de ſon "habileté: bien que ce ne ſoit qu'une ſuite de l'addreſſe de "l'auteur, qui ne fait que lui expoſer ſes images et luy "preparer de quoy produire et de quoy raiſonner. Que ſi "au contraire on veut dire tout, non ſeulement on luy "oſte un plaiſir qui le charme, et qui l'attire, mais on "fait naiſtre dans ſon cœur une indignation ſecrette, luy "donnant ſujet de croire qu'on ſe défie de ſa capacité." *Bouhours, La man. de bien penſ. quatr. dial.*

WC

we take in ſtudy and inveſtigation of every kind: for though the utility of many ſubjects inhances our ſatisfaction, yet the former principle, without any aid from this, often renders very great labour, not only ſupportable, but agreeable. Witneſs the delight with which antiquaries beſtow indefatigable pains on recovering or illuſtrating ancient fragments, recommended only by their age and obſcurity, and ſcarce apprehended to be, on any other account, of great importance. This is in general the cauſe of our pleaſure in all inquiries of mere curioſity.

NOT only the performance of actions, but alſo the conception of moſt objects, to which we have not been accuſtomed, is attended with difficulty. On this account, when *new* objects are in themſelves indifferent, the efforts that are neceſſary for conceiving them, exalt and enliven the frame of the mind, make it receive a ſtrong impreſſion from them, and thus render them in ſome meaſure agreeable. When the objects are in themſelves agreeable, theſe efforts heighten our ſatisfaction. A fine country or an agreeable proſpect is doubly beautiful to a ſtranger. It gives conſiderable exerciſe to the mind, to obſerve every part of it, and to conceive the ſituation of the ſeveral objects which it includes. A freſh diſcovery in ſcience, or a new performance in the arts,

gives greater ſatisfaction, when we become firſt acquainted with it, than ever after. The firſt time that we ſtudy a philoſophical theory, the mind runs through it with eagerneſs, that it may get a view of all its parts; is conſtantly engaged in tracing the connexion of the arguments, in examining their force, in conceiving what objections can be formed againſt them; and is by this means affected with an agreeable agitation, which ceaſes after repeated peruſals have rendered the theory familiar to us. A poem or a picture is examined with a ſimilar ardour and unremitted exertion of mind, by a perſon who has not ſeen it formerly.

THOUGH a new object be ſo ſimple as to be conceived without any difficulty, there are ſome ſituations in which it will give exerciſe to the mind, and will, for this reaſon, be agreeable. It is extremely diſagreeable, to be ſunk into indolence and languor, without any thing to awaken our attention, or give play to our faculties. This ſtate is almoſt unavoidable, when we are long confined to the contemplation of a ſingle object, or when the ſame object recurs very often to our view. In this caſe, it ſoon becomes ſo familiar, that the impreſſion which it makes upon the mind, is too faint to give it any exerciſe. Memory retains all the parts of the object ſo diſtinctly, that

that it outruns ſenſe, and, before we have ſurveyed them, informs us, that we are perfectly acquainted with them already. We find ourſelves cloyed, and immediately turn from the object with diſguſt. Any new object will, in this ſituation, be agreeable; it occurs opportunely to occupy the mind, when it was at a loſs how to employ itſelf; it frees us from the pain of ſatiety and languor; it gives an impulſe to the mind, and puts it in motion. This is always pleaſant, but its pleaſure is greatly augmented by the uneaſineſs from which it has relieved us. This is a pleaſure which moſt men taſte every day, by varying their ſtudies, their buſineſs, or their recreations. When genuine elegance in furniture or architecture has been long the faſhion, men ſometimes grow weary of it, and imitate the Chineſe, or revive the Gothic taſte, merely for the pleaſure they receive from what is unlike to thoſe things which they have been accuſtomed to ſee. The pleaſure of novelty is, in this caſe, preferred to that which reſults from real beauty.

If there are ſome things, the novelty of which produces no degree of pleaſure, this ariſes from their not at all enlivening the thought, or exerciſing the mind. If their novelty is even painful, it proceeds from their exciting ſome other ſenſation which deſtroys the pleaſure naturally attendant on the novelty.

ty. The exerciſe of mind which the conception of new objects occaſions, though it be pleaſant in its own nature, renders a diſagreeable object more diſagreeable at firſt: for the moſt oppoſite ſenſations produced by the ſame cauſe, and exiſting in the mind at once, are eaſily transfuſed into one another, and, by their compoſition, form one more violent, which always follows the nature of the ſenſation that was moſt intenſe.

SOMETIMES the elevation and exertion of mind which ſprings from the mere difficulty of conceiving a new object, or from the livelineſs of a new perception, is attended with ſurpriſe, which augments our delight or uneaſineſs, by farther enlivening the thought, and agitating the mind. For this reaſon, the poet and the orator, not only ſolicitouſly avoid ſentiments and modes of expreſſion which are trite and common, and ſearch through all the ſtores of nature for images, figures, and illuſtrations, which have not been appropriated by their predeceſſors; but alſo ſtudy to contrive the ſtructure of their compoſitions in ſuch a manner, that the commoneſt thoughts and arguments may ſurpriſe by the unexpectedneſs of their introduction *. Even the hi-

* Eſt enim grata in eloquendo novitas et commutatio, et magis inopinata delectant. *Quint. Inſt. Orat. lib.* 8. *cap.* 6.

ſtorian,

ſtorian, who is confined to known materials and facts, endeavours to give them the appearance of novelty, by the light in which he repreſents them, and by his own reflections on the cauſes, the effects, and the nature of the tranſactions which he relates. Novelty can beſtow charms on a monſter, and make things pleaſant which have nothing to recommend them but their rarity.

In like manner, any agreeable paſſion or emotion which a new object happens to produce, will run into the pleaſant ſentiment that naturally ariſes from its novelty, and will augment it. A new ſuit of cloaths gives pleaſure to a child, by its being different from his former; it likewiſe excites his pride, and gives him an expectation of attracting the notice of his companions. It gratifies the vanity of a fine lady, to be among the firſt in a faſhion; it ſeems to proclaim her rank, to diſtinguiſh her from the vulgar, and to command reſpect.

The pleaſure of novelty is ſometimes alſo heightened by reflection. When the conception of an object is attended with very conſiderable difficulty, the pleaſure which we feel in the exertion of mind neceſſary for overcoming this difficulty, is increaſed by the joy with which we reflect on our ſucceſs in having ſurmounted

ſurmounted it. When objects are of ſuch a nature that we reckon our acquaintance with them an acquiſition in knowledge, the pleaſure of their novelty ariſes in part from the ſatisfaction with which we reflect on our having made this acquiſition. Both theſe circumſtances, the conſciouſneſs of ſucceſs, and the opinion of improvement, contribute to that delight which a mathematician enjoys, the firſt time that he comprehends a difficult and curious demonſtration.

IT may be farther obſerved, that novelty in the works of genius and art derives additional charms from another principle, to be explained afterwards, the ingenuity which it ſhows. To ſtrike out a new track, to execute what was not attempted before, diſplays original genius, which we always obſerve with pleaſure.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of grandeur and ſublimity.

GRANDEUR or ſublimity gives us a ſtill higher and nobler pleaſure, by means of a ſenſe appropriated to the perception of it; while meanneſs renders any object to which it adheres, diſagreeable and diſtaſteful. Objects are ſublime, which poſſeſs *quantity*, or amplitude, and *ſimplicity*, in conjunction *.

CONSIDERABLE *magnitude*, or largeneſs of extenſion, in objects capable of it, is neceſſary to produce ſublimity. It is not on a ſmall rivulet, however tranſparent, and beautifully winding; it is not on a narrow valley, though variegated with flowers of a thouſand pleaſing hues; it is not on a little hill, though cloathed with the moſt delightful verdure, that we beſtow the epithet *ſublime*: but on the Alps, the Nile, the ocean, the wide expanſe of heaven, or the immenſity of ſpace uniformly extended without limit or termination †.

* Moſt of the ſpecies of ſublimity are explained, nearly from the principles here aſſigned, in *An eſſay on the ſublime*, by Dr *Baillie*.

† Φυσικῶς πως ἀγόμενοι μὰ Δί' οὐ τὰ μικρὰ ῥεῖθρα θαυμάζομεν, εἰ καὶ διαυγῆ καὶ χρήσιμα· ἀλλὰ τὸν Νεῖλον, καὶ Ἴστρον, ἢ Ῥῆνον, πολὺ δ' ἔτι μᾶλλον τὸν ὠκεανόν. ΛΟΓΓΙΝ. περὶ ὕψους. τμημ. λε.

WE

WE always contemplate objects and ideas with a diſpoſition ſimilar to their nature. When a large object is preſented, the mind expands itſelf to the extent of that object, and is filled with one grand ſenſation, which totally poſſeſſing it, compoſes it into a ſolemn ſedateneſs, and ſtrikes it with deep ſilent wonder and admiration: it finds ſuch a difficulty in ſpreading itſelf to the dimenſions of its object, as enlivens and invigorates its frame: and having overcome the oppoſition which this occaſions, it ſometimes imagines itſelf preſent in every part of the ſcene which it contemplates; and from the ſenſe of this immenſity, feels a noble pride, and entertains a lofty conception of its own capacity *.

LARGE objects can ſcarce indeed produce their full effect, unleſs they are alſo *ſimple*, or made up of parts in a great meaſure ſimilar. Innumerable little iſlands ſcattered in the ocean, and breaking the proſpect, greatly diminiſh the grandeur of the ſcene. A variety of clouds, diverſifying the face of the hea-

* *Longinus* contents himſelf with reſolving the ſenſation of ſublimity into the *laſt* of theſe principles, without inveſtigating the others, of which *it* is but a conſequence: Φύσει γάρ πως ὑπὸ ταληθοῦς ὕψους ἐπαίρεταί τε ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ, καὶ γαῦρόν τι ἀνάδημα λαμβάνουσα πληρῶται χαρᾶς καὶ μεγαλαυχίας. Περὶ ὕψ. τμη. ζ.

vens,

vens, may add to their beauty, but muſt take from their grandeur *.

OBJECTS cannot poſſeſs that largeneſs which is neceſſary for inſpiring a ſenſation of the ſublime, without ſimplicity. Where this is wanting, the mind contemplates, not one large, but many ſmall objects †; it is pained with the labour requiſite to creep from one to another; and is diſguſted with the imperfection of the idea with which, even after all this toil, it muſt remain contented. But we take in with eaſe one entire conception of a ſimple object, however large: in conſequence of this facility, we naturally account it one: the view of any ſingle part ſuggeſts the whole, and en-

* It is not meant, that, in theſe caſes, the ſublimity of the ocean, or of the heavens, is deſtroyed; it is only aſſerted that it is diminiſhed. A conſiderable degree of ſublimity will remain, on account of the ſimilarity that ſtill ſubſiſts among the parts.

† Simplicity is recommended, by an ancient critic, as requiſite to ſublimity in painting, on the very principle here aſſigned, which muſt render its neceſſity univerſal, as it extends equally to every other ſubject. Νικίας δ' ὁ ζωγράφος ϗ τοῦτο ἐυθὺς ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῆς γραφικῆς τέχνης οὐ μικρὸν μέρος, τὸ λαβόντα ὕλην ἐυμεγέθη γράφειν, ϗ μὴ κατακερματίζειν τὴν τεχνην εἰς μικρά ΔΙΟΜΗΤ. ΦΑΛ περὶ ἑρμην. ος. It is on the ſame principle that Longinus accounts for the production of the ſublime, by expreſſing in the ſingular, what is ordinarily expreſſed in the plural: Τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τῶν διηρημένων ἐς τὰ ἡνωμένα ἐπισυρέψαι τὸν ἀριθμὸν σωματοειδέστερον. Περὶ ὕψ. τμη. κε.

ables fancy to extend and enlarge it to infinity, that it may fill the capacity of the mind.

MANY things are indeed denominated ſublime, which being deſtitute of extenſion, ſeem incapable of amplitude, the firſt and fundamental requiſite of the ſublime. But ſuch objects will be found, on examination, to poſſeſs qualities which have the ſame power to exalt the diſpoſition of the obſerver. Length of duration; prodigious numbers of things ſimilar united, or ſo related as to conſtitute a whole, partake of the nature of *quantity*, and, as well as extenſion, enlarge and elevate the mind which contemplates them. Eternity is an object which fills the whole capacity of the ſoul, nay exceeds its comprehenſion, and ſtrikes it with aſtoniſhment and admiration. We cannot ſurvey a vaſt army or navy, without being ſenſible of their grandeur; which ariſes, not ſo much from the largeneſs of the ſpace they occupy, as from the number of men or ſhips which are in them united under one direction, and co-operate to a common end; the union and ſimilitude of the parts adding *ſimplicity* to the *vaſtneſs* of their number. Hence too is derived the ſublime of ſcience, which lies in univerſal principles and general theorems, from which, as from an inexhauſtible ſource, flow multitudes of corollaries and ſubordinate truths.

BUT

BUT do we not attribute grandeur and ſublimity to ſome things which are deſtitute of *quantity* of every kind? What can be more remote from quantity, than the paſſions and affections of the ſoul? Yet the moſt imperfect and uncultivated taſte is ſenſible of a ſublimity in heroiſm, in magnanimity, in a contempt of honours, of riches, of power, in a noble ſuperiority to things external, in patriotiſm, in univerſal benevolence. To account for this, we muſt obſerve, that, as no paſſion can ſubſiſt without its cauſes, its objects, and its effects; ſo, in forming the idea of any paſſion, we do not ſatisfy ourſelves with conceiving it as a ſimple emotion in the mind, but we run over in thought the objects about which it is employed, the things by which it is produced, and the effects by which it diſcovers itſelf. And as theſe always enter into our conception of the paſſion, and are often connected with quantity, they naturally render the paſſion ſublime. What wonder that we eſteem heroiſm grand, when, in order to imagine it, we ſuppoſe a mighty conqueror, in oppoſition to the moſt formidable dangers, acquiring power over *multitudes* of nations, ſubjecting to his dominion wide *extended* countries, and purchaſing renown, which reaches to the extremities of the world, and ſhall continue through *all the ages* of futurity? What can be more truly great, than

the object of that benevolence, which, unconfined by the narrow limits of vicinity or relation, comprehends *multitudes*, graſps whole *large* ſocieties, and even extends from pole to pole?

WE ſhall but juſt obſerve, that the ſublime paſſions, habitually prevailing in the temper, and uniformly diſplaying themſelves in ſuitable expreſſions and effects, conſtitute dignity and ſublimity of character.

IT muſt alſo be remarked, that whatever excites in the mind a ſenſation or emotion ſimilar to what is excited by vaſt objects, is on this account denominated ſublime; it being natural to reduce to the ſame ſpecies, to expreſs by the ſame name, and even frequently to confound together, thoſe objects which we contemplate with the ſame or a like diſpoſition. Hence the raging of the ſea in a ſtorm, and the loud roaring thunder, which inſpire an awful ſedateneſs, are termed ſublime. Objects exciting terror are, for this reaſon, in general ſublime; for terror always implies aſtoniſhment, occupies the whole ſoul, and ſuſpends all its motions.

IN like manner, we admire as ſublime ſuperior excellence of many kinds; ſuch eminence in ſtrength, or power, or genius, as

is

is uncommon, and overcomes difficulties which are insurmountable by lower degrees of ability; such vigour of mind as indicates the absence of low and groveling passions, and enables a person to despise honours, riches, power, pain, death; setting him above those enjoyments on which men generally put an high value, and those sufferings which they think intolerable. Such degrees of excellence, by an original principle of the mind, excite wonder and astonishment, the same emotion which is produced by amplitude. A great degree of *quality* has here the same effect upon the mind, as vastness of *quantity*, and it produces this effect in the same manner, by stretching and elevating the mind in the conception of it.

WHAT has been just now said, suggests to us another principle which has often great influence in enabling inanimate things to produce the sensation of grandeur or sublimity. There being in the mind a natural proneness to admire a great degree of mental qualities, the admiration bestowed on them will be likewise extended to whatever we consider as an effect of them. Now, we are disposed to consider many great or sublime objects as effects; and those qualities which constitute their grandeur, lead us to infer greatness of power in

their cauſe, their magnitude neceſſarily requiring this for its production, and their ſimplicity raiſing our conception of the power, by ſeeming to imply, that they were formed at once. The greatneſs, for inſtance, of the works of nature, is conſidered as a ſtriking indication of the omnipotence of their author. A vaſt fleet or army, ſuggeſts an high opinion of the power of the ſovereign or the nation by whom they are provided or employed. In ſuch caſes, our admiration of the cauſe is excited by the view of the effect, and, being reflected back on the effect, heightens the ſentiment of ſublimity which it inſpires, by means of the principles of the mind already pointed out. Thus, that mental excellence which was juſt now taken notice of as one ſpecies of ſublimity, is, at the ſame time, a principal cauſe of the delight which we find in many other ſpecies of it.

BUT in order to comprehend the whole extent of the ſublime, it is proper to take notice, that objects which do not themſelves poſſeſs that quality, may nevertheleſs acquire it by *aſſociation* with ſuch as do. It is the nature of aſſociation, to unite different ideas ſo cloſely, that they become in a manner one. In that ſituation, the qualities of one part are naturally attributed to the whole, or to the other part. At leaſt, aſſociation renders

ders the tranſition of the mind from one idea to another ſo quick and eaſy, that we contemplate both with the ſame diſpoſition; and are therefore ſimilarly affected by both. Whenever, then, any object uniformly and conſtantly introduces into the mind the idea of another that is grand, it will, by its connection with the latter, be itſelf rendered grand. Hence words and phraſes are denominated lofty and majeſtic. Sublimity of ſtyle ariſes, not ſo much from the ſound of the words, though that doubtleſs may have ſome influence, as from the nature of the ideas which we are accuſtomed to annex to them, and the character of the perſons among whom they are in moſt common uſe. This too is the origin of the grandeur which we aſcribe to objects high and elevated in place; of the veneration with which we regard things in any direction diſtant; and of the ſuperior admiration which is excited by things remote in time; eſpecially in antiquity, or paſt duration *.

BUT

* The author of *A treatiſe of human nature* has very ingeniouſly reduced theſe phænomena into the principle of aſſociation; *b.* 2. *p.* 3. § 8. I ſhall collect the ſum of his reaſoning, ſo far as it is neceſſary to take notice of it here. 'Becauſe we are accuſtomed every moment to obſerve the difficulty with which things are raiſed in oppoſition to the impulſe of gravity; the idea of aſcending always implies the notion of force exerted in overcoming this

BUT the fine arts preſent the moſt numerous examples of grandeur produced by aſſociation. In all of them, the ſublime is attained chiefly by the artiſt's exciting *ideas* of ſublime objects; and in ſuch as are mimical, this quality is chiefly owing to our being led by the exactneſs of the imitation to form ideas and conceive images of ſublime originals. Thought is a leſs intenſe energy than ſenſe: yet *ideas*, eſpecially when lively, never fail

this difficulty; the conception of which invigorates and elevates the thought, after the ſame manner as a vaſt object; and thus gives a diſtance above us much more an appearance of greatneſs, than the ſame ſpace could have in any other direction. The ſenſation of amplitude which, by this means, comes to attend the interpoſed diſtance, is transferred to, and conſidered as excited by the object that is eminent and above us; and that object, by this transference, acquires grandeur and ſublimity. And here we may obſerve, in paſſing, that this natural tendency to aſſociate ideas of grandeur with things above us, is the reaſon why the term *ſublime* is metaphorically applied to excellence of any kind, eſpecially to that ſpecies of it which elates the mind with noble pride in the conception. To our transferring, in like manner, the interpoſed ſpace, and its attendant ſenſation, to the diſtant object, is owing the veneration with which we regard, and the value which we ſet upon things remote in place. And becauſe we find greater difficulty, and muſt employ ſuperior energy, in running over the parts of duration than thoſe of ſpace, and in aſcending through paſt duration than in deſcending through what is future; therefore we value higher, and contemplate with greater veneration, things diſtant in time than things remote in ſpace, and the perſons and objects of antiquity, than thoſe which we figure to ourſelves in the ages of futurity.'

to

to be contemplated with ſome degree of the ſame emotion which attends their original *ſenſations*; and often yield almoſt equal pleaſure to the reflex ſenſes, when impreſſed upon the mind by a ſkilful imitation.

GRANDEUR in works of architecture may, in ſome inſtances, ariſe from their largeneſs; for we generally eſtimate the magnitude of things, by compariſon with thoſe of the ſame ſpecies: and though no edifice is equal in quantity to many works of nature by no means accounted great; yet lofty palaces and pyramids, far exceeding the bulk of other buildings, poſſeſs a *comparative* magnitude, which has the ſame influence upon the mind as if they had been *abſolutely* large. But ſtill the principal ſource of grandeur in architecture is *aſſociation*, by which the columns ſuggeſt ideas of ſtrength and durableneſs, and the whole ſtructure introduces the ſublime ideas of the riches and magnificence of the owner.

IN painting, ſublimity is ſometimes introduced by an artful kind of diſproportion, which aſſigns to ſome well-choſen member a greater degree of *quantity* than it commonly has *: but chiefly thoſe performances are grand,

* Thus, according to Hogarth, the inexpreſſible greatneſs

grand, which, either by the artful diſpoſition of colours, light, and ſhade, repreſent ſublime natural objects, and ſuggeſt ideas of them *; or, by the expreſſiveneſs of the features, and attitudes of the figures, lead us to conceive ſublime paſſions operating in the originals. And ſo complete is the power of aſſociation, that a ſkilful painter can expreſs any degree of ſublimity in the ſmalleſt as well as in the largeſt compaſs. It appears in the miniatures of Julio Clovio, as really as in the paintings of Titian or Michael Angelo.

THE ſublime of thoſe arts in which the inſtrument of imitation is language, muſt evi-

neſs of the Apollo Belvidere ariſes from the uncommon length of the legs and thighs. *Analyſis of Beauty, chap.* 11.

* It may be here obſerved, that, though the figures in painting can ſeldom have ſo great quantity as is ſufficient of itſelf to produce ſublimity; yet the comparative *magnitude*, and alſo the *ſimplicity*, of the figures, parts, and members, are among the principal means by which a work ſuggeſts ſublime ideas, and thus becomes itſelf ſublime. The preſervation of magnitude and ſimplicity is therefore recommended as fundamental to ſublimity, in the art of painting:

——— Lævia, plana,
Magnaque ſigna,———
Ex longo deducta fluant, *non ſecta minutim*
Quippe ſolet rerum nimio *diſperſa* tumultu
Majeſtate carere gravi.———

Freſn. de arte graph. ver. 108. 156. 204. 419.

dently

dently ariſe entirely from aſſociation; becauſe it is the only principle from which words derive their force and meaning. And in theſe arts, ſublimity preciſely conſidered, will be found reſolveable into a very few general qualities.

THE poet, or the orator, is then poſſeſſed of this excellence, when the ſentiments he utters, or the ſubjects he profeſſedly deſcribes, contain in themſelves the ſublime, either of nature, or of the paſſions and character: and the grander the originals are, the greater is the ſublimity of the imitation; whence, in claſſing ſentiments that are ſublime, the firſt place is aſſigned by critics, to thoſe which have a relation to the gods *. When Homer would convey a ſublime idea of DISCORD, he gives greatneſs of quantity to this imaginary perſon, aſſigning her ſuch prodigious ſtature, that, while ſhe walks upon the earth, her head reaches to the heavens:

Οὐρανῷ ἐστήριξε κάρη, καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει.
ΙΛ. Δ'. ver. 443.

By the ſame contrivance, Virgil produces a great idea of FAME.

Ingrediturque ſolo, et caput inter nubila condit.
ÆN. l. 4. ver. 177.

* Ἔννοιαι τοίνυν εἰσὶ σεμναὶ μάλιστα μὲν αἱ περὶ θεῶν, ὡς περὶ θεῶν λεγόμεναι. ΕΡΜΟΓ. περὶ ἰδεῶν.

The

The ſublimity of the rival ſentiments of the two Latin poets, with reſpect to Cato, ariſes in like manner from the grandeur of the ſubject, from the dignity of the character deſcribed:

Et cuncta terrarum ſubacta
Præter atrocem animum Catonis. HOR.

Secretoſque pios, his dantem jura Catonem.
VIRG.

On account of the ſuperior grandeur of the ſubject, the latter claims an undoubted preference. The former, indeed, derives additional force from the art of the compoſition, by means of which the firſt hint of an exception from Cæſar's power occaſions a ſuſpenſe of thought, a kind of anxious expectation, which, mixing with the ſublime ſenſation, heightens it. Subjects thus grand in themſelves, muſt beſtow ſublimity on a compoſition, whenever they are deſcribed in ſuch a manner as conveys entire, or augments, the feeling which they naturally excite.

IF an author's main ſubject is deſtitute of innate grandeur, it may be rendered grand, by comparing, or ſome way aſſociating it with objects naturally ſuch. By the ſame means the real greatneſs of a ſubject is increaſed. Hence

Hence metaphor, compariſon, and imagery, are often productive of ſublimity *. Cicero exalts Cæſar's idea of clemency, by repreſenting it as godlike †. Seneca ‡ gives a ſublime idea of Cicero's genius, by comparing it with the majeſty and extent of the Roman empire. The effect of the compariſon is ſometimes augmented, by the writer's inſinuating the ſuperiority of his ſubject to that with which he compares it, and artfully annexing ſome circumſtances to the latter, which, without rendering it mean, (for that would deſtroy the effect of the compariſon) yet depreſs it below the former. In this way Homer contrives to give a great idea of the Grecian army, by introducing Priam ſpeaking magnificently of the armies which he had formerly ſeen in Phrygia, but at the ſame time acknowledging it far ſuperior to them ‖.

* ΔΗΜΗΤ. ΦΑΛ. πδ. πι.

† Homines ad deos nulla re propius accedunt, quam ſalute hominibus danda. *Pro Ligar.*

‡ Illud ingenium, quod ſolum populus Romanus par imperio ſuo habuit. *Controv. lib.* 1.

‖ Ἤδη γὰρ Φρυγίην ἐισήλυθον ἀμπελόεσσαν,
Ἔνθα ἴδον πλείστους Φρύγας ἀνέρας ἀιολοπώλους,
Λαοὺς Ὀτρῆός θ' Μύγδονός τ' ἀντιθέοιο,
Οἳ ῥα τότ' ἐστρατόωντο παρ' ὄχθας Σαγγαρίοιο.
Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐπίκουρος ἐὼν μετὰ τοῖσιν ἐλέχθην,
Ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε ἦλθον Ἀμαζόνες ἀντιάνειραι·
Ἀλλ' οὐδ' οἱ τόσσοι ἦσαν, ὅσοι ἐλίκωπες Ἀχαιοί.
ΙΛ. γ'. *ver.* 184.

By the ſame means, an Italian poet repreſents Venice, which he celebrates, as greater than Rome:

Si pelago Tyberim præfers, urbem adſpice utramque;
Illam homines dices, hanc poſuiſſe deos.
SANAZAR.

Venice becomes grand by the metaphorical uſe of *pelagus*, and by the relation which it is ſaid to bear to the gods; and its grandeur is increaſed by compariſon with Rome, acknowledged great, but, at the ſame time, purpoſely degraded, by the oppoſition of *Tyber* to *pelagus*, and its relation to men. The power of imparting ſublimity to objects which naturally have it not, by giving them a relation to others, is an advantage peculiar to the arts which imitate by language; for the reſt can attain the ſublime, only by copying ſuch objects as are themſelves poſſeſſed of that quality*.

* It is perhaps neceſſary to repeat, that we here intend only the ſublime preciſely conſidered; for the term is often uſed to ſignify any great excellence of compoſition. It is thus defined by Longinus: ὡς ἀκρότης ϗ ἐξοχή τις λόγων ἐστὶ τὰ ὕψη. In this latitude he explains it, treating of the nervous, the vehement, and even the beautiful and elegant.

THE

THE principles which we have laid down explain alſo the ſublime of muſic: it ſeems to be derived in part from the length and the gravity of the notes; the former conſtituting a kind of amplitude to the ear; the latter contributing to that compoſure and ſedate expanſion of the mind which attends the perception of ſublimity: and it is then completed, when the artiſt, by ſkilfully imitating the ſublime paſſions, or their objects, inſpires theſe paſſions into his hearers, and renders them conſcious of their operation.

IN order to account farther for ſublimity in the works of art, we may obſerve, that this quality leads us to conceive the ingenuity, the ſkill, the abilities of the artiſt, and to conceive them with admiration. This admiration mixes with the ſentiment produced by the qualities of the work itſelf, and improves and heightens that ſentiment. This is a cauſe common to all the inſtances in which the productions of the fine arts inſpire a perception of ſublimity.

IT is proper to obſerve here, that things may be deſtitute of grandeur, and yet not be accounted low or mean; but may, on the contrary, poſſeſs other qualities which gratify us highly in a different way. It is only when grandeur is requiſite and expected,

that the mere abſence of it produces meanneſs. Thus a remarkable defect in quantity, in compariſon with things of the ſame kind; a reſemblance in individuals of a ſuperior ſpecies to the orders below them; or the defect of ſublimity in compoſitions of art or genius which propoſe to imitate originals, or treat ſubjects, confeſſedly noble, gives us diſtaſte, and inſpires contempt. Meanneſs ariſes often likewiſe from aſſociation, when low and groveling ideas are ſuggeſted; as, when images and ſimiles taken from mean objects, are applied to an important ſubject. Thus alſo, words and phraſes become mean, when they excite mean ideas, either by their proper ſignification, or by their being uſed only by thoſe of inferior rank.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of Beauty.

BEAUTIFUL objects are of different kinds, and produce pleaſure by means of different principles of human nature.

THE firſt ſpecies of beauty is that of *figure*; and belongs to objects poſſeſſed of *uniformity*, *variety*, and *proportion*. Each of theſe qualities pleaſes in ſome degree; but all of them united give exquiſite ſatisfaction.

FACILITY in the conception of an object, if it be moderate, gives us pleaſure: the mind thinks well of itſelf, when it is able to form its conception without pain or labour. This conſtitutes the value of perſpicuity of thought and language; which is agreeable in oppoſition to obſcurity, as this occaſions an uneaſy ſearch into the meaning of the parts, or the tendency of the whole, which requires greater labour than we are willing to beſtow. Hence too it is that *uniformity* and *ſimplicity* become agreeable. Objects endued with theſe qualities enter eaſily into the mind: they do not diſtract our attention, or hurry us too faſt

from one ſcene to another: each part is diſtinctly and ſtrongly conceived: the view of a part ſuggeſts the whole, and, impelling the mind to imagine the reſt, produces a grateful exertion of its energy.

ACCORDINGLY, in all the beautiful works of nature, uniformity is preſerved in the general appearance of the correſpondent parts. And though a perfectly accurate regularity is avoided, both in natural effects and in the fine arts; yet ſo much of it muſt be retained, as to keep the variety from degenerating into perplexity and confuſion. Regular figures are in general preferred to irregular; and ſuch as have parallel ſides to ſuch as have not. Equality is requiſite to the beauty of every piece of painting *. Even when a perfect ſimilarity in the appearance of the counterparts ſeems to be ſtudiouſly ſhunned, as in a ſide-view of a human face, the attitude of the body, or the profile of a building; yet ſtill it muſt be ſo contrived, that though it

* Altera pars tabulæ vacuo ne frigida campo,
Aut deſerta fiet, dum pluribus altera formis
Fervida mole ſua ſupremam exurgit ad oram.
Sed tibi ſic poſitis reſpondeat utraque rebus,
Ut ſi aliquid ſurſum ſe parte attollat in una,
Sic aliquid parte ex alia conſurgat, et ambas
Æquiparet, geminas cumulando æqualiter oras.
Freſn. de art. graph. ver. 145.

does

does not exhibit a *ſenſation*, it may notwithſtanding, according to the rules of perſpective, ſuggeſt the *idea* of exact uniformity. To beſtow ſimplicity upon a multitude of ſeparate phænomena, the philoſopher traces them up to common qualities, and general cauſes; and it is only when he has done ſo, that the beauty of ſcience begins *.

BUT uniformity, when perfect and unmixed, is apt to pall upon the ſenſe, to grow languid, and to ſink the mind into an uneaſy ſtate of indolence. It cannot therefore alone produce pleaſure, either very high, or of very long duration. *Variety* is neceſſary to enliven it. Where this is wanting, uniformity degenerates into dull formality. Variety in ſome meaſure gratifies the ſenſe of novelty, as our ideas vary in paſſing from the contemplation of one part to that of another. This tranſition puts the mind in action, and gives it employment, the conſciouſneſs of which is agreeable †.

IN

* Uniformity and ſimplicity are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, diſtinct ideas; the former implying the ſimilarity of the correſpondent parts; the latter, the fewneſs of unlike parts in the whole object. But as both pleaſe by the ſame principle, it was judged unneceſſary preciſely to diſtinguiſh them here.

† *Intricacy*, which often greatly contributes to beauty, may be conſidered as a ſpecies of *variety*; at leaſt, its agreeableneſs

IN the works of nature we find variety ſtudiouſly ſought after; as in the uneven ſurface of the globe; the infinity of ſhapes and hues in the flowers that adorn it; the intricate windings of rivers; the wildneſſes of nature, which we even ſet ourſelves to copy by art; and in ten thouſand other inſtances. To procure it, the architect enriches his buildings with ornaments of different forms. In all works of taſte, too great uniformity is avoided by numberleſs graceful attitudes, by varying of members, and by contraſting the parts *.

WERE

greeableneſs is derived from the ſame cauſe; and variety is moſt naturally combined with uniformity, intricacy with ſimplicity.

* Inque figurarum cumulis non omnibus idem
Corporis inflexus, motuſque; vel artubus omnes
Converſis pariter non connitantur eodem;
Sed quædam in diverſa trahant contraria membra,
Tranſverſeque aliis pugnent, et cætera frangant.
Freſn. de art. graph. ver. 137.

So great is the power of variety in producing beauty, that an ingenious artiſt, who has lately *analyſed* it, reſolves almoſt the whole of it, not altogether without reaſon, into that principle, and defines the art of compoſing to be nothing elſe but "the art of varying well." He holds uniformity no further neceſſary, than it is requiſite to convey the idea of reſt or motion, without poſſibility of falling. But here he goes too far. It were eaſy to point out inſtances, where uniformity is ſtudied, though it cannot have any degree of this effect: and he acknowledges that beauty reſides only in a *compoſed* variety; which neceſſarily implies a mixture of uniformity. He indeed ſufficiently

proves,

WERE the variety indeed boundleſs, the mind would be fatigued and pained with continual ſhifting from part to part, without the proſpect of any end of its labour; it would be diſpleaſed and diſguſted, when it found, that, after numberleſs efforts to conceive the object, the endleſs diſſimilitude and perplexed compoſition of the parts ſtill baffled its endeavours, and hindered it from perfecting its idea. A certain degree of uniformity muſt therefore be blended with the variety of objects; otherwiſe this variety, inſtead of producing moderate energy, would ſubject us to inſurmountable toil, which would make our pleaſure ſoon degenerate into pain.

THESE two qualities, by thus moderating the effects of one another, increaſe the pleaſure reſulting from each; giving the mind at once the oppoſite gratifications of facility and active exertion, mixed with, and mellowing one another.

PROPORTION conſiſts not ſo much in relations of the parts preciſely meaſurable, as in a general aptitude of the ſtructure to the end propoſed; which experience enables us

proves, that uniformity is not the only, or the chief principle of perfect beauty. Yet it often by itſelf conſtitutes ſome degree of it; as in the ſtraight and parallel ſides of a canal.

inſtantaneouſly

inſtantaneouſly to perceive, better than any artificial methods can determine it. Its influence on beauty is therefore derived from *fitneſs* *, a principle which will be illuſtrated preſently.

A very ſmall diſproportion in any of the members of the human body produces deformity. The leaſt deviation, in the productions of the fine arts, from the natural harmony of the parts, always occaſions a blemiſh.

THERE is another kind of *proportion*, at leaſt not wholly dependent on utility, which is preſerved in the appearances of things, when none of the parts are ſo ſmall, in reſpect of one another, and of the whole, as to diſappear through their ſmallneſs, while we contemplate the whole; and when none of them are ſo large, that, when we fix our view on them, we cannot diſtinctly perceive at the ſame time their relation to the whole, and to the other parts. Figures, the ſides of which are very numerous, loſe a great part of the beauty which would ariſe from this variety, by the want of proportion between the ſides and the diameter. Works in the Gothic taſte, crowded with minute ornaments, fall as

* See Hogarth's *Analyſis of beauty*, chap. 11.

much

much ſhort of perfect beauty, by their diſproportion, as by their deviation from ſimplicity.

As nothing gives us greater pleaſure than what leads us to form a lofty conception of our own faculties, ſo nothing is more diſagreeable than what reminds us of their imperfection. On this account it is, that the want of this kind of proportion diſguſts us. It leads us to entertain a low, and conſequently ungrateful, opinion of our capacity, by rendering it impoſſible to form one entire diſtinct conception of the object. The variety of its parts may amuſe us, and keep us from attempting to comprehend the whole; and then, eſpecially if it be joined with uniformity, it will yield us ſome degree of pleaſure, and conſtitute an inferior and imperfect ſpecies of beauty. But ſtill proportion is neceſſary for perfecting the beauty, and fully gratifying a correct and improved taſte.

THUS the abſence of any one of theſe ingredients, the want either of uniformity, of variety, or of proportion, diminiſhes the beauty of objects: but where all of them are in a great meaſure wanting, deformity muſt prevail. Figures may be deſirable or valuable on other accounts; but without theſe qualities they cannot be beautiful.

THERE

THERE is another cauſe, beſides thoſe already mentioned, which contributes greatly to render each of theſe qualities, uniformity, variety, and proportion, agreeable, and to render the combination of them a ſource of high delight. It is, that they are all indications of deſign, wiſdom, and contrivance; qualities of mind which we never fail to ſurvey with pleaſure. When we behold uniformity in a work, we naturally conclude, that it could not be the effect of chance, and that it could ſcarce be formed without intention. When we behold variety in a work, we are ſure that it could not proceed from undeſigning, and merely mechanical cauſes; and are diſpoſed to ſuſpect at leaſt, that it is the production of a mind. But uniformity and variety artfully blended in the ſame object, by excluding both chance and mechaniſm, put it beyond doubt, that it ſprings from a mind; that deſign, and wiſdom, and art, have been employed in uniting theſe oppoſite qualities ſo ſkilfully: we reſt in the concluſion with perfect ſatisfaction; we take pleaſure in conceiving the excellence of the cauſe, and by this the delight is heightened which we find in beholding the effect that ſuggeſts that excellence. Proportion of every kind is an additional evidence of the wiſdom of the cauſe, and indicates a higher degree of wiſdom; and therefore it is a ſource of further pleaſure in

con-

contemplating the effect. Thus the qualities which conſtitute beauty of form, ſuggeſt deſign, and lead us to infer art and wiſdom in the cauſe. The judgment is natural, immediate, and inevitable. We conceive this character of the cauſe with pleaſure; and we aſcribe this pleaſure to the viſible objects which led us to conceive, and to infer that character. This pleaſure is in itſelf a ſpecies of admiration, and therefore akin to the ſentiment of ſublimity; but being occaſioned by qualities in the object which produce a ſoft and tender ſenſation, it is modified by that ſenſation, and aſſumes its character; it renders it more intenſely pleaſant, but does not alter its nature: on the contrary, it is altered by it; it acquires that tenderneſs and ſoftneſs which is peculiar to the perception of beauty, and which diſtinguiſhes it from the more elevated emotions of the ſoul.

UTILITY, or the *fitneſs* of things for anſwering their ends *, conſtitutes another ſpecies of beauty, diſtinct from that of figure. It is of ſo great importance, that though *convenience* is ſometimes, in minuter inſtances, ſa-

* This, which is the principle of a diſtinct order of beauty, is confounded with uniformity, which is but one ingredient in that of figure, by Crouſaz; *Traité du Beau*, paſſim.

crificed to *regularity*; yet a great degree of inconvenience generally deſtroys all the pleaſure which ſhould have ariſen from the ſymmetry and proportion of the parts. It is the peculiar excellence of nature's works, that, at leaſt in the nobleſt of them, the moſt perfect fitneſs for their reſpective ends is united and rendered conſiſtent with the greateſt elegance of form †. We pay a very great regard to fitneſs and utility, in eſtabliſhing the ſtandard of beauty and proportion in the ſeveral kinds. And, though the moſt perfect art falls infinitely ſhort of nature, in combining the uſeful with the regular; yet none of its productions is reckoned a maſterpiece, in which theſe excellencies do not meet ‡; and to obtain utility, forms of inferior beauty are, for particular purpoſes, conſtantly preferred, even where beauty is far from being neglected. The cube, not any of the more varied polygons, is choſen for a pedeſtal, on account of its ſtability. Utility has determined, though with conſiderable latitude, the dimenſions and general form of moſt inſtruments and works, without adhering to which, the greateſt

† In pleriſque rebus incredibiliter hoc natura eſt ipſa fabricata,——ut ea quæ maximam utilitatem in ſe continerent, eadem haberent plurimum, vel dignitatis, vel ſæpe etiam venuſtatis. *Cic. de Orat. lib.* 3.

‡ Cic. ibid. ΞΕΝΟΦ. Απομνημ. βιϐ. γ'.

profuſion

profuſion of ornament cannot render them beautiful in the kind. Unfitneſs renders ornaments diſpleaſing when wrong applied, which, in their proper place, might be truly elegant. The ſplendor of a ſingle figure in hiſtory-painting will but augment its faultineſs, if it takes off the eye from what ought to be the principal, and obſtructs the effect which ſhould be produced by the whole. In compoſition, the moſt refined reflections, the moſt elaborate deſcriptions, the warmeſt pathos, diſpleaſe, if they break the unity, if they do not promote, much more if they retard the main deſign, to which all the parts ſhould be ſubordinate.

Sed nunc non erat his locus———

The impropriety of their poſition wholly defaces their intrinſic beauty. In general, it is from the end and deſign of works of genius that their peculiar rules muſt be deduced: this directs the author in the choice, diſpoſition, and embelliſhment of the parts: and by this the critic muſt regulate his judgment. It is from the relation which they bear to different ends, that narration, poetry, and eloquence, are ſubject to very different laws: and from the ſame ſource is derived the diverſity of the rules belonging to the ſubordinate branches of each. Could fitneſs be

diſpenſed with, a collection of fine ſentiments and figures cloathed in agreeable language, might fully gratify our taſte, however unconnected they were with one another.

THAT we may comprehend the nature of that pleaſure which is produced by fitneſs, it muſt be obſerved, that, whenever we diſcover in effects a greater degree of uniformity, or well adapted complication, than could be expected from the laws of chance; eſpecially when we recogniſe a fitneſs for anſwering an important end; we then infer, not only intention, but art and ſkill in the cauſe: which implying mental excellence and perfection, the view of it gives a noble ſatisfaction; as, on the other hand, faultineſs of contrivance, by ſuggeſting imperfect ſkill, and want of genius, diſpleaſes us greatly. When therefore we ſee a work, it leads us by a natural aſſociation to conceive its end; prone to compariſon, we examine the propriety of the parts in relation to this end; if any of them are prejudicial to it, we are diſguſted with the want of ſkill which this imperfection betrays. Further, we dwell in imagination on the inconveniences which muſt ariſe from the unfitneſs of the ſtructure; we form ſtrong ideas of them, which produce almoſt the ſame uneaſy ſentiments and paſſions as if we actually experienced them; and by this mean they often

often obliterate all the pleaſing impreſſions which the other qualities of the object might have cauſed. But when, on examination, the fitneſs of all the parts appears, the ſatisfaction with which we think on the ſkill and ingenuity thus diſplayed, communicates itſelf to the effect ſo cloſely connected with it by cauſation; and, beſides, we ſympathetically enter into a ſtrong feeling of the delight which muſt attend the poſſeſſion or uſe of what is ſo well deſigned and executed.

THE beauty of *colours* is entirely diſtinct from both the former, and pleaſes us from principles wholly different. Colours being nothing elſe but various degrees and modifications of light, ſome of them are leſs hurtful to the organs of ſight than others; and are, on that account, in ſome inſtances approved as beautiful.

SOME colours again, by their *ſplendor*, afford a lively and vigorous ſenſation, which gratifies us, by producing a chearful and vivacious diſpoſition of mind in contemplating them.

BUT the beauty of colours is, in moſt inſtances, reſolveable into *aſſociation*; thoſe being approved, which, either by a natural reſemblance, or by cuſtom, or opinion, intro-

duce and are connected with agreeable ideas of any ſort; and thoſe being diſapproved, which have any way become related to diſagreeable ones. The verdure of the fields is delightful, not only by being inoffenſive to the eye, but chiefly by its ſuggeſting the pleaſant idea of fertility. Heath in bloom would form a carpet agreeable enough to ſight, if we could ſeparate from its appearance the idea of the barrenneſs of the mountains and wilds which it covers. In dreſs, colours are either beautiful or the contrary, according to the nature of the idea which they lead us to form of the ſtation, ſentiments, and character of the wearer.

In ſome caſes, a particular dreſs, in conſequence of eſtabliſhed manners, ſuggeſts to the generality nearly the ſame idea. Wherever this *general* connexion takes place, it forms a kind of ſtandard in dreſs, for perſons in certain ſtations or profeſſions. We come to perceive a propriety in conforming to it; and we are diſpleaſed with the indecency of deviating remarkably from it.

When the idea ſuggeſted by dreſs is different in different perſons, ſo alſo is the reliſh for the colour; what ſuggeſts to one a livelineſs and vivacity of turn, gives another the idea of gaudineſs and levity; the ſame dreſs may

may convey to ſome the idea of gravity and ſedateneſs, to others that of dullneſs and auſterity.

COLOURS as applied in painting, come under conſideration here only in reſpect of their delicacy or vivacity; which, however eſtimable, are not yet of ſo great importance, as the power they have of repreſenting grandeur, or beauty of figure, or of exhibiting ſolid bodies, by ſuch an artful and ingenious imitation, as itſelf delights us in a way hereafter to be explained.

THE beauty of colours may be heightened by the addition of *variety*; a circumſtance which beſtows ſome charms on the moſt irregular mixture of them, provided they be of themſelves agreeable; eſpecially if they be ſo diſpoſed as to ſet off to advantage the ſeparate brightneſs or beauty of each other.

THERE is perhaps no term uſed in a looſer ſenſe than *beauty*, which is applied to almoſt every thing that pleaſes us. Though this uſage is doubtleſs too indefinite, we may, without a faulty deviation from preciſion, apply this epithet to every pleaſure which is conveyed by the eye, and which has not got a proper and peculiar name; to the pleaſure we receive, either when an object of ſight ſuggeſts

ſuggeſts pleaſant ideas of other ſenſes, or when the ideas ſuggeſted are agreeable ones formed from the ſenſations of ſight, or when both theſe circumſtances concur. In all theſe caſes, beauty is, at leaſt in part, reſolveable into aſſociation.

THE firſt method of effecting beauty, we have already ſeen exemplified in colours, which are themſelves objects of ſight introducing pleaſant ideas not derived from ſight. Thus alſo the ſtructure of a human face often indicates good mental diſpoſitions, which are not only themſelves approved as virtuous, but, by being approved, diffuſe a beauty over the countenance in which they are imprinted: but bad affections, expreſſed in the look, throw deformity upon the fineſt features.

IN the ſecond way is produced the only beauty of thought or ſentiment which comes properly under the preſent head; that beauty which ariſes, when the ſubject deſcribed is agreeable to ſight, as light, flowers, fields, meadows, groves; or when it is illuſtrated by images from things that are in this manner agreeable. This is one great part of the beauty of paſtoral, and enters in ſome degree into every kind of poetry *.

* The other qualities which render ſentiments beautiful or agreeable, as metaphor, fable, antitheſis, morality, elevation, &c. belong to other claſſes.

To

To the third cauſe, or the union of both the former, imitations of *beautiful* originals by figure and colour, owe their beauty. It is obſervable, that the arts which uſe theſe inſtruments have greater advantages for imitating beauty than they have for imitating ſublimity. This they can repreſent, as we have ſeen, only by ſuggeſting *ideas* of grand objects; but the copies would not, if conſidered as originals, be grand; ſince they are almoſt ever deſtitute of magnitude, its moſt eſſential requiſite. But imitations of beautiful originals, independent of their reſemblance to theſe, are beautiful; ſince they cannot otherwiſe exhibit the beauties of the originals to the thought, than by their poſſeſſing them in ſome degree: and often they poſſeſs them as perfectly as their archetypes. A ſtatue has the ſame regularity and proportion as its original. A painting may equal the object which it repreſents, not only in ſymmetry and propriety, but in colour.

THE claſſes of beauty which we have been explaining, are diſtinct in their principles, though, by reaſon of the ſimilitude of their feelings, they are reduced to the ſame *genus*. But they are often in things, variouſly united, and by their union, they render our ſatisfaction more intenſe. In a fine face all the principles of beauty are combined. To an exact ſym-

metry

metry and regular proportion of varied features, and parts nicely adapted to their ſeveral purpoſes, is ſuperadded complexion, compoſed of white and red, colours beautiful in themſelves, rendered ſtill more ſo, by the artful manner in which they are diſpoſed, and by their indicating health and freſhneſs; and the grace of the whole is heightened by a quick expreſſiveneſs of aſpect, which forces us inſtantaneouſly to perceive acuteneſs, ſagacity, ſedateneſs, ſweetneſs, or the like amiable qualities, in the mind which animates the elegant form; while the approbation attending this perception is reflected back upon the face which gave occaſion to it.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of Imitation.

EXACTNESS and livelineſs of imitation ſupply us with another pleaſure of taſte, which, as it has no peculiar name, is commonly expreſſed by that of beauty; and is by ſome termed *relative* or *ſecondary*, to diſtinguiſh it from the kinds above explained, which are called *abſolute* or *primary**. We have a natural ſenſe which is highly gratified by a deſigned reſemblance, though there be nothing agreeable in the original. Similitude is a very powerful principle of aſſociation, which, by continually connecting the ideas in which it is found, and leading our thoughts from one of them to the other, produces in mankind a ſtrong tendency to compariſon. As compariſon implies in the very act a gentle exertion of the mind, it is on that account agreeable. As a farther energy is requiſite for diſcovering the original by the copy; and as this diſcovery gratifies curioſity, produces an agreeable conſciouſneſs of our own diſcern-

* See Hutcheſon's Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue. Treat. 1. ſect. 4.

ment

ment and ſagacity, and includes the pleaſant feeling of ſucceſs; the recogniſing reſemblance, in conſequence of compariſon, augments our pleaſure *. And when an imitation is *intended*, our admiration of the ſkill and ingenuity of the artiſt diffuſes itſelf over the effect from which that ſkill is inferred, and completes the delight which the work inſpires.

HENCE the rapture with which a connoiſſeur beholds the capital performances of the eminent maſters in painting or ſculpture. Hence the main excellence of poetical or eloquent deſcriptions; the characteriſtical perfection of which ariſes from the author's judiciouſly ſelecting the moſt eſſential and ſtriking qualities of his ſubject, and combining them into ſuch a picture as quickly raiſes in the reader, and ſtrongly impreſſes on his mind, a lively idea of the original. The fundamental beauty of metaphor and allegory lies in their inſinuating the analogies of things; that of ſimilitude and compariſon, in their more explicitly propoſing theſe analogies. By this they communicate fineneſs to a ſentiment. Moſt of the figures and tropes of eloquence derive their

* Διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρυσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες, ὅτι συμβάινει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι, τί ἕκαστον. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. περὶ Ποιητικῆς, κεφ. δ'.

grace

grace from their being ſo employed, as to correſpond with the natural expreſſions, or the objects, of thoſe paſſions and ſentiments which actuate the orator, or which he would inſpire into his audience. Improbability, which is a want of reſemblance to natural things, always renders a fable or ſtory leſs entertaining; and if the improbability be very great, or extend to the material parts, it often makes it wholly nauſeous.

WHEN excellent originals are imitated, the copies derive their charms, not merely from exactneſs of imitation, but alſo from the excellence which they repreſent; and the gratification which theſe copies afford, may almoſt as properly be aſcribed to beauty or ſublimity as to imitation. As the beauty here is complicated in its principles, it will of conſequence be alſo compounded in its effect, and will raviſh the mind much more than either of its conſtituents alone. An Hercules, exhibiting proportion, ſtrength, and fortitude, in perfection, muſt be a finer ſtatue than the exacteſt imitation of a Therſites or Silenus. The works of Polygnotus, which repreſented beautiful objects, were doubtleſs more delightful than the pictures of Dionyſius or Pauſon *, how-

* Πολύγνωτος μὲν κρείττους, Παύσων δὲ χείρους, Διονύσιος δὲ ὁμοίους ἐικαζε. ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤ. περὶ ποιητ. κεφ. β'.

ever ſkilfully they might repreſent ordinary or faulty objects. The ancient Greek, or the modern Italian painters, will always be preferable to the Flemiſh; who, though they imitate *well*, do not make a judicious *choice* of ſuch beauties of nature as deſerve to be imitated *. The Margites of Homer could not have given us ſo high entertainment as we receive from the Iliad. A compariſon, however nicely ſuited to the ſubject, will pleaſe ſtill more, if it be taken from what conveys no ideas but ſuch as are noble and agreeable: and indeed, by ſuggeſting ſuch as are ſtrongly the reverſe, it will be ſufficient to turn the moſt magnificent ſubject into ridicule.

BUT ſtill the force of imitation is moſt conſpicuous, when no other principles con-

* In this particular the ancient artiſts were ſo careful, that they were not contented with imitating the moſt perfect *individuals* they could meet with; but collecting the perfections of many, they formed one *general* idea more complete than could be drawn from any ſingle real exiſtence. Ὅνπερ τρόπον ϗ τοῖς τὰ ἀγάλματα τούτοις διαπλάττουσιν, οἳ πᾶν τὸ παρ' ἑκάστοις καλὸν συναγάγοντες, κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐκ διαφόρων σωμάτων ἀθρόισαντες, εἰς μίμησιν μίαν, κάλλος ἓν ὑγιὲς ϗ ἄρτιον ϗ ἡρμοσμένον αὐτὸ αὑτῷ ἐξειργάσαντο. ϗ οὐκ ἂν ἔυροις σῶμα ἀκριβὲς κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἀγάλματι ὅμοιον. ΜΑΞ. ΤΥΡ. λογ. ζ'. Καὶ μὴν τά γε καλὰ εἴδη ἀφομοιοῦντες, ἐπειδὴ οὐ ῥάδιον ἑνὶ ἀνθρώπῳ περιτυχεῖν ἄμεμπτα πάντα ἔχοντι, ἐκ πολλῶν συνάγοντες τὰ ἐξ ἑκάστου κάλλιστα, οὕτως ὅλα τὰ σώματα καλὰ ποιεῖτε φαινεσθαι. ΞΕΝΟΦ. Απομνημ. βιβ. γ'.

cur

cur to heighten its effect: for as it is then pure and unmixed, we cannot queſtion, that the whole pleaſure of the ſentiment produced, is owing to it alone. Its power is indeed ſo great, that it not only, without the aſſiſtance of other principles, produces a conſiderable degree of pleaſure; but often recommends imperfect or faulty originals to the imitation of the artiſt, and makes him even give them the preference to others; and renders things grateful when reflected by it, which would be very ungrateful if viewed directly. The rudeſt rocks and mountains; the objects that in nature are moſt deformed; even diſeaſe and pain, acquire beauty when ſkilfully imitated in painting *. It is chiefly by copying imperfections and abſurdities that mimicry and humour pleaſe. A perfect imitation of characters morally evil, can make us dwell with pleaſure on them, notwithſtanding the uneaſy ſentiments of diſapprobation and abhorrence which they excite. The character of Iago is deteſtable, but we admire Shakeſpear's repreſentation of it. Nay, imperfect and mixt characters are, in all kinds of writing, preferred to faultleſs ones, as being juſter copies of real nature. The pleaſant

* Ἃ γὰρ αὐτὰ λυπηρῶς ὁρῶμεν, τούτων τὰς εἰκόνας τὰς μάλιστα ἠκριβωμένας, χαίρομεν θεωροῦντες· οἷον θηρίων τε μορφὰς τῶν ἀγριωτάτων καὶ νεκρῶν. ΑΡΙΣΤ. περὶ ποιητ. κεφ. δ'.

ſenſation reſulting from the imitation is ſo intenſe, that it overpowers and converts into delight even the *uneaſy* impreſſions which ſpring from the objects imitated. There can be no ſtronger proof of the force of imitation in conferring on its effects the power of pleaſing, than its rendering thoſe paſſions agreeable, when excited by it, which, when produced in the natural way, are pure and unmixed pain. Suſpenſe, anxiety, terror, when produced in tragedy, by imitation of their objects and cauſes, and infuſed by ſympathy, afford not only a more ſerious, but a much intenſer and nobler ſatisfaction, than all the laughter and joy which farce or comedy can inſpire. When thus ſecondarily produced, they agitate and employ the mind, and rouſe and give ſcope to its greateſt activity; while, at the ſame time, our implicit knowledge that the occaſion is remote or fictitious, enables the pleaſure of imitation to relieve the pure torment which would attend their primary operation.

FROM what has been ſaid, it is obvious, that the pleaſure of imitation ariſes from a combination of cauſes. Beſides the act of compariſon, which is the ſame in all inſtances, the exactneſs of the reſemblance, our diſcovery of it, and the art we conceive neceſſary

ceſſary for producing it, concur to make up our gratification.

EXACTNESS of reſemblance is ſcarce farther approved, than as it evidences ſkill, and enables us to diſcover the original. Caravaggio is cenſurable for too cloſely following the life, as well as Gioſeppino for wantonly deviating from it into fantaſtical extravagances. Among the ancient ſtatuaries likewiſe, Demetrius is cenſured for being too ſtudious of likeneſs, and ſacrificing beauty to it; and is on this account reckoned inferior to Lyſippus and Praxiteles, who, at the ſame time that they excelled in producing likeneſs, carried it no farther than was conſiſtent with beauty *. Exactneſs of reſemblance may be carried ſo far in any work of genius, as to degenerate into diſagreeable ſervility; and is eaſily diſpenſed with when the deviation from ſimilitude appears to be the reſult of ſuperior art. However, that inſtrument of imitation is doubtleſs the moſt perfect, which is capable of producing the moſt perfect likeneſs. Among the fine arts, this pre-eminence, in moſt ſubjects, belongs to ſculpture; and more to painting,

* Ad veritatem Lyſippum et Praxitelem acceſſiſſe optime affirmant. Nam Demetrius tanquam nimius in ea reprehenditur, et fuit ſimilitudinis quam pulchritudinis amantior. *Quint. Inſtit. Orat. lib.* 12. *cap.* 10.

in ſubjects perfectly adapted to it, than to poetry.

BUT even the imperfection of the inſtrument of imitation may ſometimes add merit to the effect. Though it renders the reſemblance leſs accurate, this very circumſtance inhances the pleaſure, by producing a conſciouſneſs of greater ſagacity in diſcovering the original; at the ſame time that the production of likeneſs with unapt materials, implying greater difficulty, gives riſe to an higher approbation of the ingenuity of the artiſt. In this reſpect painting is more artificial than ſtatuary. For that reaſon a fine picture will inſpire full as great pleaſure as a ſtatue. Its repreſenting ſolid bodies, only by the diſpoſition of light and ſhade, though itſelf a plane, is a proof of the higheſt ſkill. Could a perſon be formed to delicacy of taſte, and yet kept from ſeeing a picture till he were adult, it is ſcarce conceivable what rapture he ſhould feel, when he firſt diſcovered it to be but a plane variouſly ſhaded, after having firmly believed, that, like the objects to which he had been accuſtomed, it had itſelf the prominences and cavities which it repreſents *. And

* Hence, in the celebrated conteſt between a painter and a ſtatuary, concerning the merit of their arts, both argued

And as every difficulty of execution heightens our idea of the ſkill by which it is ſurmounted, not only the *importance* of the work, but alſo the *difficulty* of repreſenting paſſion and character by figure and colour, increaſe the beauty of hiſtory-painting. In this view, poetry, imitating by inſtituted ſymbols, nowiſe reſembling things, is, on moſt ſubjects, more imperfectly mimetic than the other arts: but this imperfection gives it a kind of merit, as that art is able, notwithſtanding, to ſuggeſt very lively ideas of its objects. But what conſtitutes its unqueſtionable ſuperiority to all its ſiſter-arts, is its peculiar and unrivalled power of imitating the nobleſt and moſt important of all ſubjects, the calmeſt ſentiments of the heart, and human characters diſplayed in a long ſeries of conduct. For, in determining the comparative merit of the imitative arts, we muſt not only eſtimate the excellencies of the *inſtruments* or *manners* of imitation which they reſpectively claim; but alſo the moment of

argued from real principles of excellence; the ſtatuary pleading the perfection of reſemblance in his art; the painter the ſuperior ingenuity which his diſcovered. The blind man gave the preference to the latter. The controverſy cannot be determined, till it is previouſly fixed, which principle is, on the whole, preferable, exactneſs of reſemblance, or ſkill in imitating.

what

what they imitate, and the value of the *ends* to which they are adapted *.

* All this muſt be taken under conſideration, in order to explain the nature of any one of the fine arts: and it is only after the nature of each has been unfolded, that we can judge of their relative importance. Διαφέρυσι δὲ ἀλλήλων τρισίν· ἢ γὰρ τῷ γένει ἑτέροις μιμεῖσθαι, ἢ τῷ ἕτερα, ἢ τῷ ἑτέρως, ᾧ μὴ τὸν ἀυτὸν τρόπον. ΑΡΙΣΤ. περὶ ποιητ. κεφ. ά.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of Harmony.

THE ſenſe of harmony, which enables us to perceive a kind of beauty in ſound, not only is converſant in all the arts which employ language, but itſelf lays the ſole foundation of the art of muſic. By it the ear derives from its objects a pleaſure ſimilar to what the eye receives from forms. This pleaſure is reſolveable into the agreeableneſs of *ſingle* ſounds, and into the charms and energy of a ſkilful *complication* of them.

SINGLE ſounds are either loud or low, acute or grave, ſlender or full, even or broken. To theſe qualities attention muſt be paid, if we would pleaſe the ear. If ſounds are too *low*, they do not ſtrike with force enough to gratify: if too *loud*, they confound us. Great *acuteneſs* lacerates the organ: and an exceſs of *gravity* renders the impreſſion too dull and ſpiritleſs to pleaſe. *Exility* hinders ſound from ſufficiently filling the ear, and thence is attended with a perception of meanneſs and futility: but *full* and ſwelling notes, by occupying its whole expanſion, acquire grandeur, and inſpire delight. *Broken* ſounds

ſounds grate the ear, by their harſh inequalities: *ſmoothneſs* and evenneſs is neceſſary to prevent their being diſagreeable.

HARMONY preſuppoſes the agreeableneſs of the ſeparate notes, but it is produced only by a *combination* of ſounds. The different compoſitions of articulate ſounds, added to the ſeparate qualities of each, render ſome words harmonious, others harſh. Some articulate ſounds do not eaſily concur; the tranſition from one configuration of the organs of ſpeech to the other, is difficult and uneaſy; and the hearer is led, by a delicate ſympathy with the ſpeaker, to feel this pain and labour. It is the frequency of ſuch combinations that prevents euphony in any tongue; and renders ſome languages leſs ſmooth and harmonious than others. In ſentences, periods, and diſcourſes, the harmony, or the aſperity, of ſtyle ariſes from the repetition of ſounds and combinations ſeparately agreeable or diſagreeable: and the harmony is rendered more delightful, by the *variety* which the length of the compoſition admits. The importance of variety we ſhall acknowledge, if we but reflect how tireſome ſameneſs of cadence is. The ſuperior harmony of poetry is produced by the greater facility of its combinations, joined to a conſiderable degree of *uniformity*, and

and a regular *proportion* in time; the proper method of obtaining which, in every language, determines its proſody: and the variety of the means to be employed for this end in different languages introduces a ſimilar variety in the genius and meaſure of their verſe.

WHENEVER our pleaſure ariſes from a ſucceſſion of ſounds, it is a perception of a complicated nature; made up of a *ſenſation* of the preſent ſound or note, and an *idea* or remembrance of the foregoing, which, by their mixture and concurrence, produce ſuch a myſterious delight, as neither could have produced alone. It is often heightened, likewiſe, by an *anticipation* of the ſucceeding notes. Hence it proceeds in part, that we are in general beſt pleaſed with pieces of muſic which we are acquainted with; our underſtanding them more thoroughly counterbalances the power of novelty. Hence too it is, that we often acquire in time a fondneſs for what at firſt we did not highly reliſh; the anticipation which repetition enables us to make of the ſucceeding note, ſupplying the defect in the ſenſation of the preſent, and the idea of the paſt ſound, when diſunited from it, cementing them, as it were, and making them run into one another without difficulty or harſhneſs. Senſe, memory, and imagination, are thus conjunctively employed,

employed, in exhibiting to the interior organ a ſucceſſion of ſounds, which, properly diſpoſed, eſpecially in muſic, fill us with exquiſite delight.

IT is obſervable, that the proper and pleaſing diſpoſition of ſounds in *melody* bears a great reſemblance, in its principles, to that arrangement of parts which conſtitutes the beauty of forms. It is a ſucceſſion of notes, bearing to one another a regular *proportion* in time; ſo *varied* in their lengths and intervals *, as to relieve ſatiety and tediouſneſs; and at the ſame time ſo far *uniform*, that the tranſitions are all in themſelves agreeable, ſuch as are taken in by the ear with eaſe, and are ſubordinate to the key which governs the whole.

THE ſame principles are not leſs obvious in *harmony*; the ſuperior delight of which ſprings from no other cauſe, but its poſſeſſing ſome of theſe qualities in greater perfection. The *uniformity* is preſerved almoſt undiminiſhed; the different parts being ſo combined, that no diſſonance is occaſioned by their multiplicity; but the concordant notes, melted into one an-

* As the great force of *proportion* in time is evident from the univerſal attention that is paid to it in muſic of every kind; ſo the influence of *variety* of time appears particularly in the drum, the whole muſic of which is owing to it alone.

other,

other, ſtrike the ear together without confuſion or diſtraction. With this ſimplicity, an immenſe *variety* is made conſiſtent; each ſeparate part being a diſtinct ſeries of artfully varied ſounds; the melody of all the parts being enjoyed at once; the vibrations of the concords coinciding, not always, but at regular periods; the diverſity of the concords and their ſucceſſions producing a great diverſity of harmonies; and the judicious intermixture of diſcords preventing the ſenſe from being cloyed with ſymphony too long continued. At the ſame time, the *proportion* is rendered more conſpicuous and artful, by its being preſerved in all the parts; and a new kind of it is introduced, by their comparative ſtrength. So great is the efficacy of theſe principles, that they alone produce very high pleaſure, though no paſſion be excited by the muſic.

BUT ſtill the chief excellence of muſic lies in its *expreſſion*. By this quality, muſic is applied to a determinate ſubject: by this it acquires a fitneſs, becomes adapted to an end, and agitates the ſoul with whatever paſſion the artiſt chuſes *. Its power to operate on the

* Hence different kinds of muſic may, in a conſiſtence with their being all agreeable, anſwer different and even oppoſite purpoſes. Καλὸν μὲν ἐν πολέμῳ τὸ ὄρθιον, καλὸν δὲ ἐν συμποσίῳ τὸ παροίνιον· καὶ καλὸν μὲν Λακεδαιμονίοις τὸ ἐμβατήριον, καλὸν δὲ Ἀθηναίοις τὸ κύκλιον· ᾧ καλὸν μὲν ἐν διώξει τὸ

 ἐγκελευστικὸν,

the paſſions is its moſt important virtue. And indeed, as all ſenſations and emotions reſembling in their feeling, tend to introduce each other into the mind; muſic, producing by its harmony a pleaſant diſpoſition of ſoul, renders us peculiarly prone to every agreeable affection. But it makes uſe too of other inſtruments. By the natural fitneſs of ſound for accompliſhing an imitation of, or aſſociation with, their objects and natural expreſſions, it infuſes into the breaſt paſſions correſpondent; ſettles into calm ſerenity, melts into tenderneſs or pity, ſinks into ſorrow, ſooths into melancholy, agitates with terror, elevates with joy, excites to courage, or enraptures with devotion; and thus inexpreſſibly delights the ſoul.

ἐγκελευστικὸν, καλὸν δὲ ἐν φυγῇ τὸ ἀνακλητικόν. ΗΔΕΊΑ μὲν πᾶσα μοῦσα, ἀλλὰ τὸ τῆς ΧΡΕΊΑΣ οὐχ ὅμοιον πᾶσιν. ΜΑΞ. ΤΥΡ. λογ. ζ'.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of Ridicule.

IN our enumeration of the ſimple powers which conſtitute taſte, we muſt not omit that ſenſe which perceives, and is gratified by the odd, the ridiculous, the humorous, the witty; and whoſe gratification often produces, and always tends to, mirth, laughter, and amuſement. Though inferior in dignity to the reſt, it is far from being deſpicable. It has a province, leſs important indeed than that of the others, yet both uſeful and agreeable. As they judge of grave and momentous ſubjects, it claims the ſole juriſdiction over ſuch as are more ludicrous.

ITS object is in general *incongruity*, or a ſurpriſing and uncommon mixture of *relation* and *contrariety* in things. More explicitely; it is gratified by an *inconſiſtence* and *diſſonance* of circumſtances in the *ſame* object; or in objects nearly *related* in the main; or by a *ſimilitude* or *relation* unexpected between things on the whole *oppoſite* and *unlike*.

JARRING and incongruous circumſtances meeting in the ſame ſubject, form an abſurdity,

with which we are apt to be diverted. Such are, cowardice in a boaſter; ignorance in a man, of what he ought or pretends to know; dignity of any kind blended with meanneſs; ſentiments or ſtyle in compoſition unſuitable to the ſubject. We are diſpoſed to combine the parts of things into a whole, and to beſtow upon them unity and intimate relation; we expect that they ſhould be all conſiſtent, ſuitable, and of a piece; and when we find them otherwiſe, we pronounce them ridiculous and abſurd.

WE compare in this light the qualities, not only of the ſame ſubject, but alſo of ſubjects reſembling, or otherwiſe nearly connected; and their contrariety affects us with a ſimilar ſenſation. An oppoſition of characters and behaviour in different perſons, eſpecially of the ſame family or profeſſion, often forms a diverting contraſt. A paſſion, intenſe in its feeling, excited by a trifling cauſe, moves our laughter. A glaring diſproportion betwixt the means and the end, when the means are either unequal to its attainment, or too laborious and expenſive for its importance, is on the ſame principle ridiculous.

So excurſive is the human fancy, that it continually leads us to compare things the moſt

moſt diſſimilar; and as, on the former compariſons, the appearance of incongruity, ſo, on this, the diſcovery of unlooked-for likeneſſes, analogies, and relations, proves a ſource of pleaſure and amuſement. Inferior animals provoke our mirth, whenever they mimic the actions or ſagacity of human creatures.

OBJECTS conceived to be in any of theſe ways incongruous, always gratify the ſenſe of ridicule: but they may excite, at the ſame time, a more important feeling, which, by occupying the mind, prevents our attending to the incongruity, or extinguiſhes the ſentiment thence reſulting, as ſoon as it begins to riſe. Enormous vice, though of all things the moſt incongruous to the natural ſyſtem of our minds, is never eſteemed ridiculous *. Pain or miſery is never in itſelf ridiculous; it can become ſuch only by being accidentally connected with unſuitable circumſtances, and by failing to excite pity ſo intenſe as may ſwallow up the ludicrous ſenſation.

* Nec inſignis improbitas, et ſcelere juncta, nec rurſus miſeria inſignis agitata ridetur: facinoroſos majore quadam vi, quam ridiculi, vulnerari volunt; miſeros illudi nolunt, niſi ſe forte jactant. *Cic. de Orat. lib.* 2.

WIT, *humour*, and *ridicule* *, are ſkilful imitations of odd and incongruous originals; which pleaſe us, not only by ſhewing them often more perfectly than we could have ourſelves obſerved them, but alſo by ſuperadding the gratification which reſults from imitation. This gratification is in its own nature ſerious, but is altered by the ſentiment which attends the objects imitated, and only ſerves to heighten the contempt or amuſement which they produce.

IN all theſe modes of imitation, the incongruity of the object, in itſelf, or in reſpect of the imagery uſed for illuſtrating it, is obvious. When Butler repreſents all ranks as intent on reforming the church and the ſtate, he employs a ſurpriſing complication of wit and humour, in order to ridicule the epidemical

* The author is well aware, that theſe three modes of imitation are widely different. It would be a very curious work to aſcertain the peculiar nature of each, and to mark its real diſtinction from the reſt. But, as the ſubject is in a great meaſure new, it could not be examined with accuracy, or ſo as to produce conviction of the juſtneſs of the theory, in a very narrow compaſs. And a large diſquiſition would be more than falls to its ſhare in an inquiry concerning taſte in general. It was therefore judged proper to be contented with pointing out what is common to wit, humour, and ridicule; and with giving examples which ſhow that the theory here eſtabliſhed extends to all of them.

diſtraction,

diſtraction. There is a wonderful mixture of diſſonance and relation; *diſſonance*, between the ordinary occupations of low mechanics and the difficult and noble office of legiſlation and political government; *relation*, not only as the perſons thus inconſiſtently employed are the ſame, but alſo as their demands of redreſs are generally expreſſed in language adapted to the ſtyle of their reſpective vocations *. The deſcription of Hudibras's learning becomes witty, by the ſtrange contraſt between the dignity of the ſciences aſcribed to him, and the proofs of his underſtanding them, drawn from the loweſt inſtances †.

A

* Then tinkers bawl'd aloud to ſettle
Church-diſcipline, for patching kettle, *&c.*
Botchers left old cloaths in the lurch,
And fell to turn and patch the church, *&c.*
And ſome for old ſuits, coats, or cloak;
No ſurplices nor ſervice-book.
Hudib. part 1. *cant.* 2. *ver.* 536. *&c.*

† He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly ſkill'd in analytic, *&c.*
He'd undertake to prove by force
Of argument a man's no horſe;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl;
A calf an alderman, a gooſe a juſtice,
And rooks cammittee-men and truſtees, *&c.*
Cant. 1. *ver.* 65.

For

A hoſe uſed for a cupboard, the baſket-hilt of a ſword for holding broth, a dagger for cleaning ſhoes, or toaſting cheeſe to bait a mouſe-trap, preſent ideas ſtrikingly heterogeneous *. A ſword and a dagger are ſo unlike to a knight-errant and his dwarf; a reſtive horſe to an unmanageable body-politic; courage whetted by martial muſic, to ale turned ſour by thunder; the dawning of the day to the change of colour in boiling a lobſter; torn breeches to a leaky veſſel; that, when they are brought into view at once by compariſon, metaphor, inſinuation, or alluſion, their unexpected ſimilitude in ſome

For rhetoric, he could not ope
His mouth, but out there flew a trope, *&c.*
ver. 81. *&c.*
In mathematics he was greater, *&c. ver.* 119.—188.

* When of his hoſe we come to treat,
The cupboard where he kept his meat, *ver.* 303.
His puiſſant ſword unto his ſide,
Near his undaunted heart was tied,
With baſket-hilt that would hold broth,
And ſerve for fight and dinner both, *ver.* 351.
When it had ſtabb'd or broke a head,
It would ſcrape trenchers, or chip bread,
Toaſt cheeſe or bacon, though it were
To bait a mouſe-trap, 'twould not care.
'Twould make clean ſhoes, and in the earth
Set leeks and onions, and ſo forth. *ver.* 381.

circumſtances

circumſtances produces mirth *. In Addiſon's humorous repreſentation of Tinſel's terror, it is the oddity and prepoſterous nature of the paſſion that diverts us; it is contrary to his profeſſed principles and pretended fortitude, and it riſes to a violent panic on a trifling occaſion †. When Swift ridicules human foibles, whether he makes the attack by wit, or by humour, he paints their incongruity and abſurdity. Attempts to produce learned volumes by the motions of a mechanical engine; to extract ſunbeams from a cucumber; to build houſes downward from

* This ſword a dagger had his page,
That was but little for his age:
And therefore waited on him ſo,
As dwarfs upon knights-errant do. *ver.* 375. 920. 931.
Inſtead of trumpet and of drum,
Which makes the warrior's ſtomach come,
Whoſe noiſe whets valour ſharp, like beer
By thunder turn'd to vinegar. *cant.* 2. *ver.* 107.
The ſun had long ſince in the lap
Of Thetis taken out his nap,
And like a lobſter boil'd, the morn
From black to red began to turn.
Part 2. *cant.* 2. *ver.* 29.

My Galligaſkins that have long withſtood
The winter's fury and incroaching froſts,
By time ſubdu'd, (what will not time ſubdue!)
An horrid chaſm diſcloſe, *&c.*
Thus a well-fraught ſhip, *&c.*
Splendid Shilling.

† The Drummer.

the

the roof; to improve cobwebs into ſilk; to ſoften marble for pillows and pincuſhions; to propagate a breed of naked ſheep; are palpably impoſſible or uſeleſs, or both at once *.

* Gulliver's Travels.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Of the ſenſe or taſte of Virtue.

THE moral ſenſe is not only itſelf a taſte of a ſuperior order, by which, in characters and conduct, we diſtinguiſh between the right and the wrong, the excellent and the faulty; but it alſo ſpreads its influence over all the moſt conſiderable works of art and genius. It is never unregarded in ſerious performances, and it enters even into the moſt ludicrous. It claims a *joint authority* with the other principles of taſte; it requires an attachment to morality in the epos and the drama, and it pronounces the quickeſt flights of wit, without it, phrenſy and diſtraction. Something moral has inſinuated itſelf, not only into the ſerious deſigns of Raphael, but alſo into the humorous repreſentations of Hogarth.

NAY our moral ſenſe claims authority *ſuperior* to all the reſt. It renders morality the chief requiſite; and where this is in any degree violated, no other qualities can atone for the tranſgreſſion. Particular beauties may be approved, but the work is, on the whole, condemned.

How

How great a part of the ſentiments produced by works of genius, ariſes from the exertion of this ſenſe, approving or condemning, is too obvious to require our dwelling on it. The nobleſt and moſt delightful ſubjects of imitation are affections, characters, and actions: and their peculiar merit ariſes almoſt entirely from their continually employing the moral faculty. By its approbation, more effectually than by any other means, we become intereſted for ſome of the perſons repreſented, and ſympathiſe with every change in their condition. It fills us with joyful approbation of the virtuous character, and with abhorrence, not ungrateful when thus excited, of the vicious. When proſperity and ſucceſs attend the virtuous man, we feel his good deſert, we rejoice to find it meet its due reward, we are compoſed into delightful ſerenity, complacence, and affiance in righteous providence: when he is ſunk into diſappointment and adverſity, we are ſenſible that he deſerved it not, and taſte the pleaſurable pain of compaſſion for his ſufferings, and virtuous reſentment againſt the authors of them. When the vicious man is proſperous, we glow with indignation, we feel a kind of melancholy deſpondence: when he ſuffers, we become ſenſible to the danger of vice, to the terrors of guilt; we allow his ill deſert, but mix pity with our blame. We are thus agi-

tated

tated by those most important passions, the infusion of which constitutes the highest entertainment that works of taste can give.

BUT what extensive influence the moral sense has on taste of every kind, it will be unnecessary particularly to describe, if we only recollect the various perceptions which it conveys. To it belongs our perception of the fairness, beauty, and loveliness of virtue; of the ugliness, deformity, and hatefulness of vice; produced by the native qualities of each considered simply. From it is derived our perception of decency, fitness, and congruity in the former; of incongruity, indecency, and unfitness in the latter; which arises from implicit comparison of them with the structure and constitution of the mind. By it we perceive that virtue is obligatory, right, and due; and that vice is undue, unlawful, and wrong: the perception springs from the supremacy of our approving and disapproving faculty, as our internal governor prescribing a law of life. The same sense conveys a perception of merit or good desert in virtue; of demerit or ill desert in vice; a perception which never fails to be excited when we think at once of moral and natural good or evil. From this variety of sensations arise all the reflex passions which regard good or bad men as their objects. How much

theſe ſentiments and affections enter into the perceptions of taſte, the leaſt reflection will inform us.

THUS much may ſuffice for an analyſis of taſte into thoſe ſimple powers of human nature which are its principles. There are qualities in things, determinate and ſtable, independent of humour or caprice, that are fit to operate on mental principles common to all men, and, by operating on them, are naturally productive of the ſentiments of taſte in all its forms. If, in any particular inſtance, they prove ineffectual, it is to be aſcribed to ſome weakneſs or diſorder in the perſon who remains unmoved when theſe qualities are exhibited to his view. Men are, with *few* exceptions, affected by the qualities we have inveſtigated: but theſe qualities themſelves are, without *any* exception, the conſtituents of excellence or faultineſs in the ſeveral kinds. What is neceſſary for perceiving them with perfect reliſh, we ſhall next examine.

PART

PART II.

The formation of taſte by the union and improvement of its ſimple principles.

SECT. I.

Of the union of the Internal Senſes, and the aſſiſtance they receive from delicacy of paſſion.

ANY *one* of the internal ſenſes, exiſting in vigour and perfection, forms a particular ſpecies of taſte, and enables a man to judge in ſome one ſubject of art or genius: but *all* of them muſt at once be vigorous, in order to conſtitute taſte in its juſt extent. This *union* is neceſſary, not only for giving it a proper compaſs, but alſo for perfecting each of its exertions.

OUR ſentiments and emotions receive an immenſe addition of ſtrength from their reciprocal influence on one another. Concomitant emotions, related by their feeling, their direction, or their objects, or even without

any relation exiſting in the mind together, run into one, and by their mixture produce an intenſe ſenſation. Hence different gratifications, either of the ſame or diverſe ſenſes, occurring to the mind at once, give it a complicated joy. The ſtillneſs and ſerenity of a ſummer morning, the ſweet fragrance of flowers, the muſic of birds, and a thouſand other agreeable circumſtances, are, even commonly, obſerved to beſtow extraordinary force on the grandeur or beauty of rural ſcenes.

THOUGH each object of taſte has ſome *leading* character, by which it is peculiarly fitted to produce one *principal* ſenſation, it may, at the ſame time, by its *ſubordinate* qualities, produce *attendant* feelings, which will render the principal one higher and more intenſe, by their conſpiring with it. But if the principles of taſte adapted to theſe, be weak or deficient, we not only loſe entirely *ſome* of the pleaſures which the object might convey, but cannot even enjoy *any* of them with perfect reliſh, as we are inſenſible to the heightenings which each receives from its connexion with the reſt.

NONE of our ſenſations is more able to ſupport itſelf without foreign aid, than that of grandeur; of which a great critic reckons it a neceſſary character, that it pleaſes ſtill more

the

the oftener it is examined *. Yet every one muſt be ſenſible, how much more intenſe it is rendered by novelty; for the ſublimeſt objects often ſtrike us very weakly, or ſcarce at all, when, by long cuſtom, they have become familiar. The ſublimity of the heavens could not fail to enrapture one unaccuſtomed to the glorious ſpectacle. Though the ſentiment of ſublimity fills, and almoſt exceeds the capacity of the mind, we can yet receive along with it other pleaſureable feelings, which will increaſe it by their conjunction. The moſt elevating objects in nature may be rendered more delightful by their beauty and utility. The moſt extenſive power may be rendered more ſublime, by its being exerciſed in ſuch a manner as to produce moral approbation. Virgil gives a ſublime idea of the Romans, when he repreſents them as deſtined for empire univerſal, as preſcribing laws at pleaſure, and forcing into ſubjection the moſt haughty oppoſers. But he artfully renders it more ſublime, by inſinuating, that they exerciſed their power in clemency to willing ſub-

* Ὅταν ὦν ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ἔμφρονος καὶ ἐμπείρου λόγων πολλάκις ἀκουόμενόν τι, πρὸς μεγαλοφροσύνην τὴν ψυχὴν μὴ συνδιατιθῇ, μηδ' ἐγκαταλείπῃ, τῇ διανοίᾳ πλεῖον τοῦ λεγομένου τὸ ἀναθεωρούμενον, πίπλῃ δ', ἂν τὸ συνεχὲς ἐπισκοπῇς, εἰς ἀπαύξησιν· οὐκ ἂν ἔτ' ἀληθὲς ὕψος εἴη. ΛΟΓΓ. περὶ ὕψ. τμη. ζ'.

jects *. This procures our moral approbation, and augments the ſentiment of grandeur which it accompanies. In architecture, the ſeparate pleaſures ariſing from the beauty, proportion, fitneſs, and ornaments of the parts, heighten the ſublime. In painting, the ſublime is generally attended by the graceful.

POETRY is a complication of beauties, reflecting by their union additional luſtre on one another. The ſublime, the new, the elegant, the natural, the virtuous, are often blended in the imitation; brightened by the power of fiction, and the richeſt variety of imagery; and rendered more delightful by the harmony of numbers. When poetry is ſet to well-adapted muſic, both gain *new* power by their alliance. The muſic, by exciting the requiſite affections, puts the mind in a diſpoſition to conceive ideas ſuited to them, with peculiar facility, vivacity, and pleaſure. Theſe ideas the poet raiſes: and they, in their turn, enliven the affections, and preſerve them from languiſhing or expiring, by rendering their objects more deter-

* Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.
Hæ tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere ſubjectis, et debellare ſuperbos.
Æn. vi. 847.

minate,

minate. But in order to experience this compound pleaſure, both a muſical ear and a poetic taſte are requiſite: the want of either extinguiſhes one part of the delight, and very much diminiſhes the other.

THE degree of force with which objects ſtrike us, depends much on the *prevailing* diſpoſition of the mind. Things often affect us deeply, when we are in an humour ſuited to them, though at another time they would make ſmall impreſſion. The ſmalleſt injury may produce fury in a perſon naturally paſſionate, or by accident chagrined. When the temper of the mind is ſuch as gives it an habitual turn to one kind of ſentiments and affections, it enters into them, whenever they occur, with extraordinary ſpirit. As they fall in with its predominant bent, no force is required to adapt it to the perception of them; it ſpontaneouſly, and even eagerly embraces them, as perfectly conformable to its frame.

NOW, as all the objects of the ſame internal ſenſe, however various, have their common qualities; ſo all theſe ſenſes are analogous in their principles and feeling. The ſame turn of mind is on this account congruous to them all. The prevalence and exerciſe of any one of them diſpoſes and attunes the mind to all the reſt. And this previous diſpoſition to them beſtows

beſtows ſtrength and vigour on all their exertions. In fact, the kindred powers of taſte are ſeldom diſunited. Where all of them have conſiderable vigour, one may be, in compariſon with the reſt, predominant, either by the natural conſtruction of the mind, or by peculiar culture: but where one of them is remarkably dull, or altogether wanting, the others ſcarce ever appear in full perfection.

THE union of theſe powers has a further influence in forming taſte, as that union opens a new field, in which taſte may exerciſe itſelf, and in which many flowers may be gathered for adorning the native beauty of its objects. As the fine arts are truly ſiſters, derived from the ſame common parent *nature*, they bear to one another, and to their original, various ſimilitudes, relations, and analogies *. One who poſſeſſes all the internal ſenſes vigorous, and has employed them all about their various objects, is able to trace out theſe. They have charmed every genuine critic; and every reader of taſte is delighted with the metaphors and compariſons which are founded on the perception of them. In obſerving them we find a noble and exquiſite entertainment.

* Eſt etiam illa Platonis vera---vox, Omnem doctrinam harum ingenuarum et humanarum artium, uno quodam ſocietatis vinculo contineri ----- Mirus quidam omnium quaſi conſenſus doctrinarum, concentuſque reperitur. *Cic. de Orat. l.* 3.

They

They continually occur to an extenſive taſte; and, mingling with the more immediate and confined gratification of each power of imagination, increaſe its delightfulneſs. As one *ſcience*, by ſupplying illuſtrations, makes another better *underſtood*; ſo one *art*, by throwing luſtre on another, makes it more exquiſitely *reliſhed*. This enlargement of taſte places one, as it were, upon an eminence; and not only enables him to take in a wider proſpect, but alſo improves all the parts of it, by comparing or contraſting them.

In all theſe ways our interior ſenſes, merely by their union, tend to form and perfect taſte.

WE may here take occaſion to mention a principle, diſtinct from all the internal ſenſes, from which taſte will, in many inſtances, receive aſſiſtance. It is ſuch a *ſenſibility of heart*, as fits a man for being eaſily moved, and for readily catching, as by infection, any paſſion that a work is fitted to excite. The ſouls of men are far from being alike ſuſceptible of impreſſions of this kind. A hard-hearted man can be a ſpectator of very great diſtreſs, without feeling any emotion: A man of a cruel temper has a malignant joy in producing miſery. On the other hand, many are compoſed of ſo delicate materials, that the ſmall-

eſt

eſt uneaſineſs of their fellow-creatures excites their pity. A ſimilar variety may be obſerved, in reſpect of the other paſſions. Perſons of the former caſt will be little affected by the moſt moving tragedy; thoſe of the latter turn will be intereſted by a very indifferent one. A performance which can infuſe the keeneſt paſſions into the breaſt of an Italian, will affect a Frenchman very little, and leave an Engliſhman perfectly unconcerned. We are apt to be aſtoniſhed, when we read of the prodigious force with which eloquence wrought upon the delicate ſpirits of the Athenians; and feel ſo little of any thing analogous to it, that nothing but the moſt unexceptionable evidence could make it credible. This diverſity in the formation of the heart will produce a conſiderable diverſity, in the ſentiments which men receive from works of taſte, and in the judgment which they form concerning them.

A VERY great part of the merit of moſt works of genius ariſes from their fitneſs to agitate the heart with a variety of paſſions. In the moſt excellent muſic, the agreeableneſs of the melody, and the richneſs of the harmony, are only ſubſervient to the expreſſion. It is ſo much the buſineſs of painting and poetry to affect us, by infuſing ſuitable paſſions,

ſions, that a very ingenious critic * has miſtaken it for the *only* buſineſs of theſe arts. Some kinds of poetry are addreſſed principally to the powers of imagination, and attain their ultimate end, by exhibiting pictures of ſuch objects as gratify our internal ſenſes. Such particularly is deſcriptive poetry. But even this kind will ſoon grow languid and unentertaining, if it does not ſupport itſelf, by introducing ſubjects of an affecting nature. In dramatic poetry, and in eloquence, the ultimate end is to affect: whatever only pleaſes the internal ſenſes is ſubordinate to this end, and becomes faulty if it be not conducive to it.

SINCE, therefore, the pathetic is a quality of ſo great moment in works of taſte, a man who is deſtitute of ſenſibility of heart muſt be a very imperfect judge of them. He is a ſtranger to thoſe feelings which are of greateſt importance to direct his judgment. If a perſon poſſeſſed all the internal ſenſes in perfection, without delicacy of paſſion, he could eſtimate the principal works of genius, only by their inferior qualities. In a tragedy, he might perceive whether deſcriptions of natural objects are beautiful or ſublime, whe-

* The Abbé du Bos. See *Reflex. Critiq. ſur la poëſie & ſur la peinture*, paſſim.

ther

ther the characters are natural and well ſupported, whether the ſentiments are juſt and noble; he might examine, with coldneſs and indifference, the beauties and the faults of the compoſition: but whether it has accompliſhed its main end, whether the fable is fit to produce pity and terror in the ſpectators, he muſt be totally at a loſs to determine. In a word, he can have no reliſh for any thing that is addreſſed to the *heart*.

DELICACY of paſſion muſt be united with vigorous internal ſenſes, in order to give taſte its juſt extent. Where this union takes place, works of genius produce their full effect; and inſpire a complicated pleaſure. A man receives adequate perceptions of all their qualities, and by this means has it in his power to allow each its proper weight in determining his judgment concerning the merit of the whole. Delicacy of paſſion may intereſt a perſon ſo much, that he cannot for ſome time examine a performance with critical exactneſs; but it gives him exquiſite delight in the mean time, and enables him to paſs a juſt ſentence at laſt.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the influence of Judgment upon Taſte.

THE completeſt *union* of the internal *ſenſes*, is not of itſelf ſufficient to form good taſte, even though they be attended with the greateſt delicacy of paſſion. They muſt be aided with *judgment*, the faculty which diſtinguiſhes things different, ſeparates truth from falſehood, and compares together objects and their qualities. Judgment muſt indeed accompany even their moſt *imperfect* exertions. They do not operate, till certain qualities in objects have been perceived, diſcriminated from others ſimilar, compared, and compounded. In all this, judgment is employed: it bears a part in the diſcernment and production of every form that ſtrikes them. But in aſſiſting their *perfect* energies, it has a ſtill more extenſive influence. Good ſenſe is an indiſpenſable ingredient in true taſte, which always implies a quick and accurate perception of things as they really are.

THAT judgment may completely exhibit to the internal ſenſes, the beauties and excellencies of *nature*, it meaſures the amplitude of things, determines their proportions, and

traces out their wiſe conſtruction and beneficial tendency. It uſes all the methods which art and ſcience indicate, for diſcovering thoſe qualities that lie too deep ſpontaneouſly to ſtrike the eye. It inveſtigates the laws and cauſes of the works of *nature:* it compares and contraſts them with the more imperfect works of *art*; and thus ſupplies materials from which fancy may produce ideas, and form combinations, that will ſtrongly affect the mental taſte.

JUDGMENT finds out the general characters of *each art*, and, by comparing them, draws concluſions concerning the relations which ſubſiſt between *different* arts. Till it has diſcovered theſe, none of them can acquire that additional power of pleaſing which is imparted to them by their mutual connexion.

IN every art, a juſt performance conſiſts of various parts, combined into one ſyſtem, and ſubſervient to one deſign. But, without the exerciſe of judgment, we cannot know whether the deſign is ſkilfully proſecuted, whether the means are well adjuſted to the end, whether every member which is introduced, has a tendency to promote it.

In *muſic*, the *ear* immediately perceives the pleaſure reſulting from each principle: but *judgment*, aſſuming the perceptions of that organ, compares them, and by compariſon determines their reſpective merit and due proportion. It enables the ear, from its diſcovery of the general relations, to diſtinguiſh with preciſion between invention and extravagance, to diſcern the ſuitableneſs or unſuitableneſs of the parts, and their fitneſs or unfitneſs to ſuſtain the main ſubject.

In *painting*, judgment diſcovers the meaning of the piece; not only remotely, as it is the inſtrument of that previous knowledge which is neceſſary for underſtanding it; but alſo more immediately, as, from the ſtructure and relation of the parts, it infers the general deſign, and explains their ſubſerviency to the main end of the whole. It compares the imitation with its exemplar, and ſees its likeneſs. It is judgment, working on our experience, that puts it in our power to know, whether the painter has fixed upon the attitudes and airs in nature appropriated to the paſſions, characters, and actions which he would repreſent; and, when theſe attitudes are various, whether he has choſen thoſe which moſt perfectly correſpond with the unity and propriety of his deſign. Painting being circumſcribed to an inſtant of time, judgment alone

can perceive, whether that inſtant is properly ſelected, whether the artiſt has pitched on that moment which comprehends the circumſtances moſt eſſential to the grand event, and beſt allows, without a deviation from ſimplicity, the indication of the other requiſite circumſtances. It eſtimates the due proportion of all the figures, in dignity, elegance, and luſtre, and their due ſubordination to the principal. In fine, it is neceſſarily employed in that exhibition of the object to the ſenſes which muſt be previous to their perception of it.

IN order to approve or condemn in *poetry* or *eloquence*, we muſt take into view at once, and compare, ſo many particulars, that none can heſitate to acknowledge the abſolute neceſſity of a ſound and vigorous judgment. We muſt determine, whether the fable or deſign is well imagined in congruity to the ſpecies of the poem or diſcourſe; whether all the incidents, or arguments are natural members of it; which of them promotes its force or beauty, or which, by its want of connexion, obſtructs the end, or debilitates its genuine effect; what degree of relation is ſufficient to introduce epiſodes, illuſtrations, or digreſſions, ſo that they may appear, not excreſcences and deformities, but ſuitable decorations. It is *ſenſe* which is pleaſed or diſpleaſed when theſe

theſe things are determined: but *judgment* alone can determine them, and preſent to ſenſe the object of its perception. By an accurate ſcrutiny of the various relations of the parts, judgment fixes that ſituation in which they will appear with greateſt advantage, and moſt promote that regular organization on which both the elegance and vigour of the whole depends. It compares characters with nature; and pronounces them either real or monſtrous. It compares them with other characters; and finds them good or bad in the kind, properly or improperly marked. It compares them with themſelves; and diſcovers whether they are conſiſtent or inconſiſtent, well or ill ſupported; whether their peculiar decorum is preſerved or violated. Truth and juſtneſs is the foundation of every beauty in ſentiment; it imparts to it that ſolidity, without which it may dazzle a vulgar eye, but can never pleaſe one who looks beyond the firſt appearance: and to aſcertain truth, to unmaſk falſehood, however artfully diſguiſed, is the peculiar prerogative of judgment. The fineſt ſentiments, if applied to ſubjects unſuitable, may not only loſe their beauty, but even throw deformity upon the whole: and judgment alone perceives the fitneſs or unfitneſs of their application. This faculty arrogates alſo to itſelf, in ſome degree, the cogniſance of ſtyle and language; and, by bringing it to

the teſt of cuſtom, diſcovers its propriety, purity, and elegance. Judgment, not ſatisfied with examining the ſeparate parts, combines them, and the feelings which they produce, in order to eſtimate the merit of the whole. It ſettles the relative value of different poems and diſcourſes, of the ſame or various kinds, by a ſtudious and ſevere compariſon of the dignity of their ends, the difficulty of attaining them, the moment of their effects, the ſuitableneſs and ingenuity of the means employed.

THUS in all the operations of taſte, judgment is employed; not only in preſenting the ſubjects on which the ſenſes exerciſe themſelves; but alſo in comparing and weighing the perceptions and decrees of the ſenſes themſelves, and thence paſſing ultimate ſentence upon the whole.

BUT though the reflex ſenſes and judgment muſt be united, yet, in a conſiſtence with true taſte, they may be united in very different proportions. In ſome, the acuteneſs of the *ſenſes*; in others, the accuracy of the *judgment*, is the predominant quality. Both will determine juſtly: but they are guided by different lights; the former, by the perception of ſenſe; the latter, by the conviction of the underſtanding. One *feels* what pleaſes

ſes or diſpleaſes; the other *knows* what ought to gratify or diſguſt. Senſe has a kind of inſtinctive infallibility, by means of which, when it is vigorous, it can preſerve from error, though judgment ſhould not be perfect. Judgment, by contemplating the qualities that affect taſte, by ſurveying its ſentiments in their cauſes, often makes amends for dulneſs of imagination. Where *that* prevails, one's chief entertainment from works of genius lies in what he feels: where *this* is predominant, one enjoys principally the intellectual pleaſure which reſults from diſcovering the cauſes of his feelings. This diverſity in the form and conſtitution of taſte is very obſervable in two of the greateſt critics of antiquity. Longinus is juſtly characteriſed

An ardent judge, who, zealous in his truſt,
With warmth gives ſentence.———

In him the internal ſenſes were exquiſitely delicate; but his judgment, though good, was not in proportion. On this account he delivers juſt ſentiments with rapture and enthuſiaſm, and, by a kind of contagion, infuſes them into his readers, without always explaining to them the reaſon of their being ſo affected. Ariſtotle, on the contrary, appears to examine his ſubject, perfectly cool and unaffected; he diſcovers no warmth of imagination,

nation, no ſuch admiration or ecſtaſy, as can, without reflection, tranſport his readers into his opinion. He derives his deciſions, not from the livelineſs of feeling, but from the depth of penetration; and ſeldom pronounces them, without convincing us that they are juſt. Some degree of the ſame diverſity may be remarked in Bouhours and Boſſu among the moderns.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Taſte improveable; by what means; and in what reſpects.

BOTH reflex ſenſe, and judgment, its aſſociate, are originally implanted in very different degrees in different men. In ſome they are ſo *weak* and languid, that, in many inſtances, they ſcarce at all ſhow themſelves, and are incapable of a very high degree of improvement by any education, care, or exerciſe. In others they are naturally *vigorous*, ſo that they ſpontaneouſly exert themſelves on moſt occaſions, determine with conſiderably accuracy, and perceive with wonderful acuteneſs. In the *former* the ſeeds of taſte muſt, without the greateſt culture, lie for ever latent and inactive: and to the *latter*, culture is far from being unneceſſary; by means of it, the principles of taſte may be improved very much beyond their original perfection *.

* Il eſt certain que la nature ne fait pas toute ſeule un bel eſprit. La plus heureuſe naiſſance a beſoin d'une bonne education, et de cet uſage du monde, qui rafine l'intelligence, et qui ſubtiliſe le bon ſens. 4. *Entret. d'Ariſte et d'Eugene.*

This remark is as applicable to taſte as to any other ingredient in the idea expreſſed by the term *bel eſprit.*

WE

WE are ſcarce poſſeſſed of any faculty of mind or body that is not improveable. Even our *external ſenſes* may be rendered more acute than they were at firſt. Perſons accuſtomed to obſerve diſtant objects can deſcry them more readily than others. Touch often becomes much more exquiſite in thoſe whoſe employment leads them to examine the poliſh of bodies, than it is in thoſe who have no occaſion for ſuch examination. Uſe very much improves our quickneſs in diſtinguiſhing different flavours, and their compoſitions. But the *internal ſenſes* may receive vaſtly greater alterations. The former are *ultimate* principles in human nature; and, like the elemental parts, or the fundamental laws of the material world, are in a great meaſure exempted from our power: the latter are *derived* and *compounded* faculties, liable to alteration from every change in that ſeries, or combination of cauſes, by which they are produced. The former are more directly ſubſervient to our preſervation than our pleaſure; and therefore, like the vital motions, are almoſt entirely ſubjected to the wiſer government of the author of our natures: the latter, though highly conducive to our well-being and entertainment, are not neceſſary to our being; and may, for this reaſon, without great hazard, be in a conſiderable degree intruſted to our own care, and made

made dependent for their perfection on the conſequences of our own endeavours to regulate and improve them.

TASTE very early begins to ſhow itſelf: but it is at firſt *rude*, inaccurate, and confined. It is *gradually* formed, and by ſlow ſteps advances towards *excellence*. Every exertion of it, if properly applied, wears off ſome defect, corrects ſome inaccuracy, ſtrengthens ſome of its principles, or gives it a reliſh for ſome new object. Like all our other powers, it is ſubject to the law of *habit*, which is the grand, indeed the only *immediate* means of improvement of every kind, extending its power to all our faculties, both of action and of perception. Every expedient for cultivating either, is but a particular ſpecies of uſe and exerciſe, which derives its efficacy ſolely from the force of cuſtom. To the forming of taſte, peculiar means are in their nature ſuited. The ſame qualities of the mind which, by their operation, produce the reflex ſenſes, will, by cooperating with habit, improve and exalt them. Whatever therefore uſually excites theſe qualities, and draws them out into act, muſt be a mean of cultivating taſte. It grows by ſuch congruous exerciſe, and always holds proportion to the natural vigour of its principles, the propriety and efficacy of the culture beſtowed

ſtowed upon it, and the ſkill and diligence with which it is applied.

'Tis eaſy to trace the progreſs of taſte in ourſelves or others. Children diſcover the rudiments of it. They are paſſionately fond of every novelty; pleaſed with order and regularity in ſuch ſimple inſtances as they can comprehend; delighted with a glow of colours; admirers of every form which they think auguſt: they perceive, often to a ſurpriſing degree, the harmony of ſounds; are charmed with an appearance of ingenuity in their diverſions; prone to imitate, and gratified by every effect of imitation which they are capable of obſerving: they are very quick in diſcerning oddity, and highly entertained with the diſcovery of it: and they will hardly ever fail of paſſing a right judgment concerning characters, when theſe characters are exerted in a ſeries of actions level to their underſtandings. But a ſmall degree of excellence ſatisfies them, a falſe ſemblance of it is eaſily impoſed on them for the true; any diſguiſe miſleads them. The daubing of a ſignpoſt, the improbable tales of nurſes, the unnatural adventures of chivalry, the harſh numbers of Grubſtreet rhyme, the grating notes of a ſtrolling fidler, the coarſeſt buffoonery, are ſufficient to delight them. In ſome, for want of exerciſe and culture, the

ſame

ſame groſſneſs, or contraction of taſte con inues always; or taſte is applied in a low, perverſe, or whimſical manner. They may deſpiſe a reliſh for *childiſh* trifles; but themſelves enter into *important* ſubjects with as little reliſh as the mereſt children; or are perhaps delighted with *other trifles*, a very little different or ſuperior in kind. Of dreſs or equipage, of the beauties of a tulip, of a ſhell, or a butterfly, they are accurate judges and high admirers: but the ſublimity of nature, the ingenuity of art, the grace of painting, the charms of genuine poetry, the ſimplicity of paſtoral, the boldneſs of the ode, the affecting incidents of tragedy, the juſt repreſentation of comedy; theſe are ſubjects of which they underſtand nothing, of which they can form no judgment. Many who pretend to judge, having purſued a wrong track of ſtudy, or fixed an erroneous ſtandard of merit, betray an uninformed, fantaſtical, or perverted reliſh. It is only in the few who improve the rudiments of taſte which *nature* has implanted, by *culture* well choſen, and judiciouſly applied, that taſte at length appears in elegant form, and juſt proportions.

THUS taſte, like every other human excellence, is of a progreſſive nature; riſing by various ſtages, from its ſeeds and elements

to maturity; but, like delicate plants, liable to be checked in its growth and killed, or elſe to become crooked and diſtorted, by negligence, or improper management *. *Goodneſs* of taſte lies in its maturity and perfection. It conſiſts in certain *excellences* of our original powers of judgment and imagination combined. Theſe may be reduced to four; *ſenſibility*, *refinement*, *correctneſs*, and the *proportion* or *comparative adjuſtment of its ſeparate principles*. All theſe muſt be in ſome conſiderable degree *united*, in order to form *true taſte*. The perſon in whom they meet, acquires authority and influence, and forms juſt deciſions; which may be rejected by the caprice of *ſome*, but are ſure to gain *general* acknowledgment. This excellence of taſte ſuppoſes, not only *culture*, but culture *judiciouſly applied*. Want of taſte unavoidably ſprings from *negligence*; falſe taſte, from *injudicious* cultivation.

* Le ſentiment dont je parle eſt dans tous les hommes, mais comme ils n'ont pas tous les oreilles et les yeux également bons, de même ils n'ont pas tous le ſentiment également parfait. Les uns l'ont meilleurs que les autres, ou bien parce que leurs organes ſont naturellement mieux composés, ou bien parce qu'ils l'ont perfectionné par l'uſage fréquent qu'ils en ont fait, et par l'experience. *Reflex. Crit. ſur la poëſie et ſur la peinture, part* 2. § 23.

SECT

SECT. IV.

Of Senſibility of Taſte.

IN order to form a fine taſte, the mental powers which compoſe it, muſt poſſeſs exquiſite *ſenſibility* and delicacy; muſt be

——*Feelingly alive*
To each fine impulſe.——

THERE is naturally a vaſt difference among mankind, in the acuteneſs of all their perceptive powers. They are in ſome, of ſo *tender* and delicate a ſtructure, that they are *ſtrongly affected* both with pleaſure and pain. In others, their *dullneſs* renders both enjoyments and ſufferings *languid*. This diverſity is in none of our powers more conſpicuous than in *taſte*. In ſome, *taſte* is ſo extremely *ſenſible*, that they cannot ſurvey any excellence of art or nature, but with high reliſh and enthuſiaſtic rapture; nor obſerve any deformity or blemiſh, without the keeneſt diſguſt. Others, devoted to the exerciſe of reaſon, the gratification of appetite, or the purſuits of gain, are perfect ſtrangers to the ſatisfactions, or uneaſineſſes of taſte; they can ſcarce form any idea of them. Addiſon men-

tions a celebrated mathematician, who was ſo perfectly incapable of any impreſſion from the charms of poetry, that he read the Æneid, with no other ſatisfaction than what he derived from a compariſon of it with a map of the travels of Æneas.

SENSIBILITY very much depends on the *original* conſtruction of the mind; it being, leſs than any other of the qualities of good taſte, *improveable* by uſe. The effect of *habit* on our *perceptions* is the very reverſe of that which it produces on our *active powers*. It *ſtrengthens* the latter, but gradually *diminiſhes* the vivacity of the former. Cuſtom wears off the difficulty of conception, which renders new objects peculiarly agreeable or diſagreeable. They come by repetition to enter the mind with ſo great facility, that they give no exerciſe to its faculties; and, by conſequence, convey much leſs intenſe delight or uneaſineſs than at firſt. Hence it would ſeem to follow, that the more we are converſant with objects of taſte, the leſs forcible our ſentiments ſhould be. And indeed the moſt *unexperienced* feel the moſt *turbulent* and *violent* pleaſure or pain. Uſe renders both more *reſerved* and moderate:

For fools admire, *but men of ſenſe* approve.

But

But ſtill we find in fact, that an extenſive acquaintance with the beauties of art and nature heightens our reliſh for them. When we are accuſtomed to the ſtudy, we can ſurvey no object with indifference; but receive higher pleaſure, or more pungent diſguſt, than they whoſe taſte is wholly unimproved.

THE following obſervations will account for this ſeeming paradox.

WERE the *ſame* object, however excellent, to be continually preſented to our taſte, it muſt ſoon loſe its charms; firſt becoming indifferent, and then diſguſting, by the langour which a continual identity of exerciſe would introduce. Hence no natural ſcene, no production of art or genius, can pleaſe us long, except every new ſurvey diſcovers beauties unobſerved before, or gives us additional aſſurance of its perfection. But the objects of taſte are infinitely various. One who indulges it is continually changing his ſubjects, and feeling pleaſures, or pains really diſtinct, though in the higheſt degree analogous. He thus preſerves a ſort of *novelty*, which tends to keep up the original vivacity of his perceptions: and the continual employment of taſte produces ſome *effects* which compenſate, nay often overbalance, the gradual decay of ſenſibility by repetition.

IT is by enabling us to conceive objects with *facility*, that cuſtom diminiſhes the ſtrength of their impreſſions. But *facility*, if moderate, is a ſource of pleaſure: it will therefore, by its *immediate* influence, for ſome time prevent our delight from being weakened. Cuſtom alſo renders our conceptions, though leſs *ſtriking*, yet more *complete* and accurate. A more perfect object is preſented to the mind, than could be, previous to uſe: and its greater *perfection* may increaſe our approbation or diſlike, as much as *novelty* did before. A performance often fails to pleaſe or diſguſt, merely becauſe, having an inadequate idea of its parts, we do not obſerve the qualities from which theſe ſentiments ſhould reſult. A perſon unſkilled in poetry or painting will ſurvey a work with perfect indifference, becauſe he does not really ſee its beauties, or its blemiſhes. But let theſe be pointed out to him by one more knowing in the art, immediately he begins to approve, or diſapprove. Cuſtom ſupplies the place of an external monitor, by enabling us to take in at one view a full perception of every quality on which the excellence or faultineſs depends.

IT may be obſerved farther, that taſte, being a faculty of a derivative kind, implies in its exertion mental *actions*, which are ſtrengthened

ſtrengthened by uſe and exerciſe. And *their* improvement tends to ſupport the delicacy and livelineſs of *its* perceptions. Cuſtom ſtrengthens thoſe principles and proceſſes of thought by which our reflex ſenſations are produced; and the ſenſations muſt always bear ſome proportion to the vigour of their cauſes. The mind acquires a habit of enlarging itſelf to receive the ſentiment of ſublimity, by being accuſtomed to expand its faculties to the dimenſions of a large object: by uſe, it becomes ſkilful in compounding uniformity with variety; in meaſuring proportion; in tracing out deſign; in judging of imitation; in blending heterogeneous qualities. This expertneſs gives force and boldneſs to the ſentiments produced, and heightens the attendant conſciouſneſs of our own abilities.

OBJECTS impreſs us more or leſs, according to the degree of *attention* which we beſtow upon them. Cuſtom enables us to apply our minds more vigorouſly to objects than we could do at firſt. Not only is it difficult, to *form* a complete conception of new objects; but, when they excite neither ſurpriſe nor curioſity, it is ſometimes even difficult to *attempt* conceiving them, and to bring ourſelves ſteadily to contemplate them. Cuſtom wears off this indiſpoſition; begets an aptitude and previous

previous bias to the emotions which beauty and deformity inſpire; and thus renders us prone to their peculiar ſentiments. Works of taſte fall in with the predominant temper, and on that account eaſily engage the attention, affect us deeply, and excite the livelieſt perceptions. It is remarkable too, from whatever cauſe it proceeds, that we ſet a high value on what we have been long accuſtomed to. A man of taſte places the pleaſures of imagination in a higher claſs than other men are apt to do; he eſteems them more noble and ſubſtantial: and the opinion acquired by cuſtom, of their value and importance transfuſes itſelf into each gratification.

THE ſentiments of taſte depend very much on *aſſociation*. So far as they proceed from this, *cuſtom* muſt augment them; as cuſtom, by adding a new principle of union, renders the connexion more intimate, and introduces the related ideas more quickly and forcibly. Cuſtom likewiſe begets new aſſociations, and enables works of taſte to ſuggeſt ideas which were not *originally* connected with them: and what a ſurpriſing intenſeneſs the aſſociation of ideas, originally foreign, beſtows on our perceptions, both pleaſurable and painful, is obvious in too many inſtances to require being enlarged on.

By the concurrence of theſe cauſes, the ſenſibility of taſte is even *augmented*, notwithſtanding the tendency of habit to *diminiſh* it. Its gratification, or diſguſt is often more exquiſite, than any of the emotions which attend appetite and paſſion. It becomes ſo acute, that the *ſmalleſt* beauties and blemiſhes have force ſufficient to affect it. But though the vivacity of its perceptions ſhould ſometimes decay by repetition; yet cuſtom, producing the other perfections of taſte, gives a refinement, elegance, and aſſurance to our ſentiments, which may compenſate their *violence* at firſt. *Judgment* may approve with the greateſt confidence and juſtice, when *fancy* is no longer enraptured and enthuſiaſtically moved.

Sensibility of taſte ariſes chiefly from the ſtructure of our internal ſenſes, and is but indirectly and remotely connected with the ſoundneſs or improvement of judgment. Inſenſibility is *one* ingredient in many ſorts of falſe taſte; but does not alone conſtitute ſo much one ſpecies of *wrong* taſte, as a total *deficience* or great *weakneſs* of taſte. Senſibility may ſometimes become *exceſſive*; and render us extravagant both in liking and diſliking, in commending and blaming. But, in truth, this extravagance proceeds much leſs commonly from exceſs of ſenſibility, than from a defect

in

in the other requiſites of fine taſte; from an incapacity to diſtinguiſh and aſcertain, with preciſion, different degrees of excellence, or faultineſs. Inſtead of forming an adequate idea of the nature of the beauty or deformity, we go beyond all bounds of moderation; and when we want to expreſs our ſentiments, can do it only in general terms, tumid and exaggerated. If we are diſpleaſed, we ſignify it, with the inveteracy of a Dennis, in terms of general invective; and, without explaining the cauſes of our diſapprobation, pronounce it poor, dull, wretched, execrable. If we are pleaſed, we cannot tell with what, how, or why; but only declare it fine, incomparable, with the unmeaning rapture of an ancient rhapſodiſt, who, without underſtanding the principles of art, or the ſenſe of an author, like a madman, really agitated by the fury which the poets feigned, could recite or praiſe them with ſuch vehemence, as tranſported himſelf, and aſtoniſhed his auditors *.

* From Plato's dialogue inſcribed *Io*, we learn, that there were men of this character, who travelled through Greece, and contended at the public feſtivals. Their chief employment was, to repeat beautiful paſſages from the poets, particularly Homer, with a rapturous and enthuſiaſtic pronunciation, as if they had an exquiſite and warm perception of their excellence. It is probable that they alſo declaimed in praiſe of their favourite verſes: this ſeems to be implied in the expreſſions, περὶ ποιητῆ διαλέγειν, περὶ Ὁμήρου λέγειν καὶ ἐυπορεῖν, and is inſinuated by the proof which Socrates

crates produces of their ignorance of art, from the capacity of every real artiſt to diſtinguiſh beauties from faults, and to point them out in the works of any performer in the kind. Socrates proves, from the conceſſions of his antagoniſt, that neither did his ſentiments proceed from true taſte, from a vigorous perception of the beauties he recited, nor his encomiums from judgment, from a critical ſkill in the principles of beauty. He therefore, in his uſual ſtrain of irony, reſolves both into an unaccountable agitation of ſpirit, proceeding either from madneſs or from inſpiration; and with great humour compares the ſeveral muſes to as many magnets. The muſe inſpires the poet, without any agency or knowledge of his; he, in the ſame manner, conveys the inſpiration to his rhapſodiſt; and he to his attentive hearers: juſt as the loadſtone, by its imperceptible and unaccountable influence, attracts a ring of iron, that a ſecond, and that a third.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of Refinement of Taſte.

REFINEMENT, or *elegance*, which, as well as ſenſibility, is included in the idea of *delicacy*, is another quality requiſite for forming a perfect taſte.

TASTE is ſo deeply rooted in human nature, that none are pleaſed but with ſome degree of *real* excellence and beauty. But a very *low* degree will *ſatisfy* one who is acquainted with nothing higher. As we can form no ſimple *idea*, till its correſpondent *ſenſation* has been firſt perceived; ſo, with reſpect to many of our ideas, we are confined to that preciſe *degree* of which we have had experience, and cannot by any means enlarge them. Our thoughts can ſcarce be raiſed to a diſtinct conception of higher pleaſure or pain, than we have actually felt. On this account *real* excellence, however *low*, will not only *gratify*, but *fill* the unimproved ſenſe *.

But

* Je ne comprends pas le bas peuple dans le public capable de prononcer ſur les poëmes ou ſur les tableaux, comme de décider à quel degré ils ſont excellents. Le mot de public ne renferme ici que les perſonnes qui ont acquis

But knowledge of greater perfection in the kind produces *nicety*; makes our pleaſure, when obtained, more elegant; but renders it more difficult to be obtained. Theſpis in his cart, no doubt, charmed his contemporaries, though his rude and imperfect repreſentations would have afforded little entertainment to their politer ſucceſſors, accuſtomed to the completer drama of Sophocles and Euripides. The coarſe jeſts of Plautus, not only pleaſed the general taſte, but gained the approbation of Cicero; and never loſt their credit, till the politeneſs of a *court* produced a refinement in wit and humour *. A very ſorry ballad, or the wildeſt flights of ungoverned fancy, are admired by the vulgar: but nothing inferior to the regular invention and maſterly execution of Homer can fully ſatisfy a perfect taſte. An indifferent tune on a bad inſtrument con-

acquis des lumieres, ſoit par la lecture, ſoit par la commerce du monde. Elles ſont les ſeules qui puiſſent marquer le rang des poëmes et des tableaux, quoiqu'il ſe rencontre dans les ouvrages excellents des beautés capable de ſe faire ſentir au peuple du plus bas étage et de l'obliger à ſe récrier. Mais comme il eſt ſans connoiſſance des autres ouvrages, il n'eſt pas en état de diſcerner à quel point le poëme qui le fait pleurer, eſt excellent, ni quel rang il doit tenir parmi les autres poëmes. *Reflex. Crit. ſur la poeſie et ſur la peinture, part* 2. § 22.

* At veſtri proavi Plautinos et numeros et
Laudavere *ſales*; nimium patienter utrumque
(Ne dicam ſtulte) mirati: ſi modo ego et vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido ſeponere dictum.
Hor. Ars Poet. ver. 270.

tents the many: but the imperfection, or groſſneſs of its harmony is intolerable to a fine ear.

HABIT, as was obſerved, tends to diminiſh the ſenſibility of taſte. From this diminution, refinement in ſome degree proceeds. In proportion as our gratifications loſe their intenſeneſs by repetition, we become indifferent to the *imperfect* degrees of beauty which fully ſatisfied us before. We are no longer touched with ordinary charms; but acquire a kind of avidity, which demands the utmoſt beauty and perfection. Where-ever this is wanting, we feel a deficience, we are unſatisfied and diſappointed.

BUT refinement and elegance of taſte is chiefly owing to the acquiſition of *knowledge*, and the *improvement* of judgment.

USE muſt greatly promote it, though, without any cultivation of our faculties, it ſhould only ſtore our memory with ideas of a variety of productions. For we ſhould thus be able to *compare* our preſent object with others of the kind. And though men are well enough ſatisfied with *indifferent* performances in every art, while they are ignorant of *better*; yet no ſooner do they become acquainted with what has ſuperior merit, than they readily,

readily, of their own accord, give it the preference. And, as compariſon has a great influence on the mind, many things which might be tolerable, if viewed by themſelves, will diſguſt, when ſet in competition with others. To one who has been little converſant in works of art or genius, that may wear the charm of novelty, and appear to have the merit of invention, which another diſcerns to be trite and common, or a mere ſervile copy. What has in itſelf ſome degree of ſublimity or beauty, often appears mean or deformed by compariſon with forms more auguſt or graceful. The unexperienced will admire, as the effect of prodigious ſkill, what one who is acquainted with more artful contrivance, or more ingenious imitation, cenſures as arrant bungling. To a taſte refined, and by practice qualified for making compariſons, an *inferior* ſort or degree of beauty appears a real and poſitive *blemiſh**.

HABITUAL

* An ingenious French critic well remarks the importance of being enabled to form compariſons, by having had opportunity of ſtudying many excellent performances. "On ne parle pas de l'expreſſion auſſi bien qui Pline et les "autres ecrivains de l'antiquité en ont parlé, quand on ne "s'y connoît pas. D'ailleurs il falloit que des ſtatues, où "il ſe trouve une expreſſion auſſi ſavante et auſſi correcte "que celle du Laocoon, du Rotateur, de la Paix des Grecs, "enduiſſent les anciens connoiſſeurs et même difficiles ſur "l'expreſſion. Les anciens qui, outre les ſtatues que j'ai

HABITUAL acquaintance with the objects of taſte, not only thus ſupplies a ſtock of knowledge, but alſo wonderfully *improves* the judgment. There is none of our faculties on which cuſtom has a greater influence. Though at firſt it could only diſcover and diſtinguiſh the moſt *obvious* qualities of things, it may, by exerciſe, acquire acuteneſs ſufficient to penetrate into ſuch as are moſt *latent*, and to perceive ſuch as are moſt *delicate*. At firſt it can take in only the ſimpleſt combinations of qualities or ſhort trains of ideas; but, by being often employed, it acquires enlargement; and is enabled to comprehend, to retain diſtinctly, and to compare with eaſe, the moſt complicated habitudes, and the largeſt and moſt intricate compoſitions of ideas. In conſequence of culture, it diſcovers, in objects, qualities fit to operate on taſte, which lie too deep for the obſervation of a novice; it can inveſtigate the niceſt and moſt complex perfections, and lay open the moſt trivial faults *. Hence what was

" citées, avoient encore une infinité d'autres pieces de " comparaiſon ex ellentes, ne pouvoient pas ſe tromper " en jugeant de l'expreſſion dans les tableaux, ni prendre " le mediocre en ce genre pour l'exquis." *Reflex. Crit. ſur la poëſie, et ſur la peinture, part* 1. § 38. The ſame author repeats and illuſtrates this obſervation in many other paſſages.

* Quam multa vident pictores in umbris et in eminentia,

was at firſt cenſured as a fault, often, on our taſte becoming refined, appears to be a beauty. When reaſon is weak, it loſes itſelf in a long and intricate demonſtration; it cannot retain the connexion of the whole; it ſees nothing but confuſion, and obtains neither conviction nor delight. In like manner, in matters of taſte, judgment, when rude and unimproved, is bewildered amidſt the complexneſs of its object, or loſt in its obſcurity; and by being baffled excites diſguſt. But, as ſoon as cuſtom has enabled it to ſurmount this difficulty, and enlarge its views, it excites high approbation of thoſe beauties which were formerly diſreliſhed. As the moſt complicacated reaſonings become moſt entertaining, the moſt *ſubtile* excellencies produce the moſt refined approbation. Being remote, and veiled, as it were, they give exerciſe to our faculties; and, by drawing out the vigour of the mind, *continue* to pleaſe, when the *groſſer* and more palpable qualities have entirely palled upon the ſenſe. They are like thoſe delicate flavours, which, though not ſo agreeable at firſt, pleaſe much longer than ſuch as are too luſcious, or too much ſtimulate the

tia, quæ nos non videmus? quam multa, quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in eo genere exercitati? *Cic. Acad. Queſt. lib.* 2.

organ *. The profuſion of ornament beſtowed on the *parts*, in Gothic ſtructures, may pleaſe one who has not acquired enlargement of mind ſufficient for conceiving at one view their relation to the *whole*; but no ſooner is this acquired, than he perceives ſuperior elegance in the more *ſimple* ſymmetry and proportion of Grecian architecture.

* The truth of this obſervation Cicero, without aſſigning the cauſe, illuſtrates, in a variety of inſtances, with regard both to taſte and the external ſenſes: "Difficile enim dictu eſt, quænam cauſa ſit, cur ea, quæ maxime "ſenſus noſtros impellunt voluptate, et ſpecie prima acerrime commovent, ab iis celerrime faſtidio quodam, "et ſatietate abalienemur. Quanto colorum pulchritudine "et varietate floridiora ſunt in picturis novis pleraque, "quam in veteribus? quæ tamen etiam, ſi primo aſpectu "nos ceperunt, diutius non delectant: cum iidem nos in "antiquis tabulis illo ipſo horrido obſoletoque teneamur. "Quanto molliores ſunt, et delicatiores in cantu flexiones, et falſæ voculæ, quam certæ et ſeveræ? quibus tamen non modo auſteri, ſed, ſi ſæpius fiunt, multitudo "ipſa reclamat. Licet hoc videre in reliquis ſenſibus, "unguentis minus diu nos delectari, ſumma et acerrima "ſuavitate conditis, quam his moderatis: et magis laudari quod terram, quam quod crocum olere videatur. In "ipſo tactu eſſe modum et mollitudinis et lævitatis. Quin etiam guſtatus, qui eſt ſenſus ex omnibus maxime voluptarius, quippe dulcitudine præter cæteros ſenſus commovetur, quam cito id, quod valde dulce eſt, aſperna"tur ac reſpuit? quis potione uti, aut cibo dulci diutius "poteſt? cum utroque in genere ea, quæ leviter ſenſum "voluptate moveant, facilliime fugiant ſatietatem. Sic "omnibus in rebus, voluptatibus maximis faſtidium finitimum eſt." *Cic. de Orat. lib.* 3.

Italian

Italian muſic gives ſmall delight at firſt; but when once the ear is opened to take in the complexity of its harmony, and the delicate relations of diſcords, introduced with ſkilful preparations and reſolutions, it then gives exquiſite delight. The ſame may be obſerved of the refinements of poetry and eloquence, of wit and humour. The copious and varied declamation of Cicero will make a quicker impreſſion than the ſimple nervous eloquence of Demoſthenes; but this gives the higheſt and moſt durable ſatisfaction to a fine taſte. The polite and knowing are chiefly touched with thoſe delicacies which would eſcape the notice of a vulgar eye.

It is poſſible to acquire ſo great refinement, eſpecially when taſte is accompanied with genius, that we conceive in *idea* a ſtandard of higher excellence than was ever in *fact* produced; and, meaſuring the effects of art by this abſolute and exalted form, we always miſs ſome part of that immenſity which we have figured out to ourſelves *. Lionardo da

* M. Antonius—diſertos ait ſe vidiſſe multos, eloquentem omnino neminem. Inſidebat videlicet in ejus mente ſpecies eloquentiæ, quam cernebat animo, re ipſa non videbat.—Multa et in ſe, et in aliis deſiderans, neminem plane qui recte appellari eloquens poſſet videbat.—Habuit profecto comprehenſam animo quandam formam

da Vinci is ſaid to have conceived ſo high a ſtandard of perfection, that, from deſpair of reaching it in the execution, he left many of his pictures unfiniſhed. When imagination is inflamed and elevated by the perfection exhibited to it, it goes on of its own accord to fancy completer effects than artiſts have found means actually to produce: by reaſon of ſome unpliableneſs in the materials employed, the *execution* ſeems always to fall ſhort of our *conception*. No performer can excell in every thing: each is characteriſed by ſome predominant talent. The particular excellence of one enables us to diſcern the faultineſs of another. And by combining the virtues that are diſperſed among the different maſters, into one image; as Zeuxis produced an Helen, by ſelecting, from many beautiful virgins, the parts that were in each moſt beautiful *; we form in our minds a model of perfection, the parts of which, though taken from different originals, are rendered conſiſtent, by the ſkill with which

formam eloquentis, cui quoniam nihil deerat, eos, quibus aliquid, aut plura deerant, in eam formam non poterat includere.——— Ipſe Demoſthenes, quamquam unus eminet inter omnes in omni genere dicendi, tamen non ſemper implet aures meas: ita ſunt avidæ et capaces: et ſemper aliquid immenſum, infinitumque deſiderant. *Cic. Orat.*

* Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib. 35. cap. 9.

they

they are articulated. A man of genius, poſſeſſed of ſo ſublime a ſtandard, endued with ſuch exquiſite refinement of taſte, in whatever art he practiſes, will repreſent his objects, not merely as they are, but, like Sophocles, as they ought to be *. A taſte thus refined will not capriciouſly *reject* whatever it perceives to be deficient:

Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit, quem volt manus et mens;
Nec ſemper feriet, quodcunque minabitur arcus.

But it can be *ſatisfied* and *filled*, only with the higheſt perfection that is practicable.

REFINEMENT of taſte exiſts only where to an original delicacy of imagination, and natural acuteneſs of judgment, is ſuperadded a long and intimate acquaintance with the beſt performances of every kind. None ſhould be ſtudied but ſuch as have real excellence; and thoſe are chiefly to be dwelt upon which diſplay new beauties on every

* Indeed the great maſters in every art imitate, not ſo much individual nature, as a ſublimer ſtandard which exiſts only in their own conceptions. This Ariſtotle obſerves in poetry, περὶ ποιητ. κεφ. δ'. The ſame is true of painting. See above, part 1. ſect. 4. This ſubject is explained with equal ſolidity and elegance, by the author of *A Commentary and Notes on Horace's epiſtle to the Piſoes*, *note on ver.* 317.

review.

review. The moſt conſpicuous virtues will be at firſt perceived. Farther application will diſcover ſuch as lie too deep to ſtrike a ſuperficial eye; eſpecially if we aid our own acuteneſs by the obſervations of thoſe whoſe ſuperior penetration, or more accurate ſtudy, has produced a genuine ſubtilty of taſte. An able maſter, or an ingenious critic, will point out to a novice, many qualities in the compoſitions of genius, or the productions of art, which, without ſuch aſſiſtance, would have long, perhaps always, remained undiſcovered by him. And repeated diſcoveries of this kind, either made by one's own ſagacity, or indicated by others, beget in time an habitual refinement, a capacity of making ſimilar ones with facility and quickneſs.

WHERE refinement is wanting, taſte muſt be coarſe and vulgar. It can take notice only of the groſſer beauties, and is diſguſted only with the moſt ſhocking faults. The thinneſt diſguiſe, the leaſt depth is ſufficient to elude its ſcrutiny. It is inſenſible to the delicacies of art and nature: they are too fine, and make too ſlight an impreſſion to be obſerved. As ſavages can be touched with nothing but what excites the utmoſt extravagance of paſſion, ſo a groſs and barbarous taſte can reliſh nothing that is not either palpable or overdone. Chaſte beauties it has not

not acuteneſs to perceive; complex ones it has not force enough to comprehend. Looking only to the ſurface, it often approves what is really faulty or defective, and is indifferent to what poſſeſſes the utmoſt elegance. Its deciſions are, by conſequence, diſproportioned to the real merit of the objects: the moſt glaring, the leaſt artificial performances are ſure to gain the preference. It has been often remarked, that a certain groſſneſs and want of refinement in the Engliſh taſte, allows, and even demands a boldneſs, a groſſneſs, and indelicacy, in their theatrical entertainments, which would be intolerable to the elegant taſte of a French audience.

BUT an exceſſive or falſe refinement is equally to be avoided *. It is like a weakly conſtitution, which is diſordered by the minuteſt accident, or like a diſtempered ſtomach, which nauſeates every thing. It is a capriciouſneſs of mind, which begets an habit of conſtantly prying into qualities that are remote, of diſcovering imaginary delicacies,

* True taſte is a proper medium betwixt theſe extremes. "Ce diſcernement fait connoître les choſes "telles qu'elles ſont en elles-mêmes, ſans qu'on demeure "court, comme le peuple, qui s'arrête à la ſuperficie; "ni auſſi ſans qu'on aille trop loin, comme ces eſprits "rafinez, qui a force de ſubtilizer s'evaporent en des i-"maginations vaines et chimeriques." *Entret. 4. d'Ariſt.*

or faults which none elſe can perceive; while one is blind to what lies perfectly open to his view; like the old philoſopher who was ſo intent on the contemplation of the heavens, that he could not ſee the pit that had been dug directly in his way. Or it is a minuteneſs of taſte, which leads one to ſeek after and approve trifling excellencies; or to avoid and condemn inconſiderable negligencies, a ſcrupulous regard to which is unworthy of true genius. Or it is a faſtidiouſneſs of judgment, which will allow *no* merit to what has not the *greateſt*, will bear no mediocrity or imperfection; but with a kind of malignity, repreſents every blemiſh as inexpiable.

THIS depravity of taſte has led many authors, ſtudious of delicacy, to ſubſtitute ſubtilty and unnatural affectation * in its ſtead. The younger Pliny ſays, "The Gods "took Nerva from the earth, when he had "adopted Trajan, leſt he ſhould do any ac- "tion of an ordinary nature, after this di-

* Quintilian marks ſtrongly ſome features of this vicious refinement, as it appeared among the orators of his time. "Tum demum ingenioſi ſcilicet, ſi ad intelli- "gendos nos opus ſit ingenio.——Nos melius, quibus "ſordent omnia quæ natura dictavit; qui non ornamen- "ta quærimus, ſed lenocinia." *Inſt. Orat. lib.* 8. *præm.*

"vine

" vine and immortal deed. For this noble " work deſerved the honour of being the laſt " action of his life, that, the author of it be- " ing immediately deified, poſterity might be " left in doubt, whether he was not really a " god when he performed it *." This is mere ſubtilty, not true refinement; for it has no ſolidity. Seneca, aiming conſtantly at elegance, corrupted the Roman eloquence, by introducing a childiſh prettineſs, a profuſion of antitheſis and point †. When poetry and eloquence are brought to perfection, the next generation, deſiring to excel their predeceſſors, and unable to reach their end by keeping in the road of truth and nature, are tempted to turn aſide into unbeaten tracks of nicety and affectation. The novelty catches, and infects the general taſte. By its ſtandard the ſimpleſt and the correcteſt authors are canvaſſed, ſecret meanings, artful allegories, diſtant alluſions, and the like fanciful quali-

* Dii cœlo vindicaverunt, ne quid poſt illud divinum, et immortale factum, mortale faceret. Deberi quippe maximo operi hanc venerationem, ut noviſſimum eſſet, auctoremque ejus ſtatim conſecrandum, ut quandoque inter poſteros quæreretur, an illud jam Deus feciſſet. *Plin. Paneg. Traj.*

† This cenſure is paſſed on him by an unqueſtionable judge. " In eloquendo corrupta pleraque, atque eo perni- " cioſiſſima, quod abundant dulcibus vitiis." *Quint. Inſt. Orat. lib.* 10. *cap.* 1.

ties, are diſcovered and applauded, where they never were intended. Homer compares Menelaus, exulting at the ſight of Paris, when advancing to engage him in ſingle combat, to a hungry lion, when he ſeizes a deer or a wild goat *. This ſimilitude ſtrongly and beautifully expreſſes the courage and alacrity with which he met his rival. But this does not ſatisfy ſome of his ſcholiaſts. They will have Paris compared to a goat for his incontinence, and to a deer for his cowardice, and his love of muſic. In Jupiter's golden chain †, ſome have diſcovered an emblem of the excellence of abſolute monarchy; and in Agamemnon's cutting off the head and hands of Antimachus's ſon ‡, have imagined an alluſion to the crime of the father, who had propoſed to lay *hands* on the ambaſſadors that demanded the return of Helen, and from whoſe *head* the advice to detain her had proceeded. Falſe refinement diſlikes on grounds equally chimerical and inadequate as thoſe which procure its approbation. The delicacy of Ariſtarchus was ſo much ſhocked with Phœnix's horrible intention of murdering his father in the extravagance of his rage, that he cancelled the lines in which it is, with great propriety, related, on purpoſe to repreſent to

* Ιλιαδ. γ'. ver. 21.
† Ιλ. Θ'.
‡ Ιλ. λ'.

Achilles

Achilles the fatal miſchiefs that ſpring from ungoverned fury and reſentment *. The nicety of Rymer is diſguſted with the cunning and villany of Iago, as unnatural and abſurd, ſoldiers being commonly deſcribed with openneſs and honeſty of character † To critics of this claſs, Homer's low ſimilitudes, and ſimple manners, or Shakeſpear's irregularities and unharmonious numbers, are intolerable faults.

FALSE delicacy in critics may in ſome meaſure proceed from an exceſſive ſenſibility of taſte, or ſubtilty of judgment indulged without diſtinction or reſerve. But moſt commonly it is the offspring of vanity and ignorance. Pride leads us to affect a refinement which we have not; we know not in what real excellence conſiſts; we therefore fix ſome partial or whimſical ſtandard, and, judging by it, run into falſe elegance and capricious nicety. True taſte penetrates into all

* Ιλ. ι. ver. 460. Τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ βούλευσα, κ. τ. λ. This nicety Plutarch juſtly cenſures as capricious and ill applied: Ὁ μὲν οὖν Ἀρίσαρχος ἐξῶλε ταῦτα τὰ ἔπη. ἔχει δὲ πρὸς τὸν καιρὸν ὀρθῶς, τῷ Φοίνικος τὸν Ἀχιλλέα διδάσκοντος, οἷόν ἐστιν ὀργὴ, ᾗ ὅσα διὰ θυμὸν ἄνθρωποι τολμῶσι, μὴ χρώμενοι λογισμῷ, μηδὲ πειθόμενοι τοῖς παρηγοροῦσι. Πῶς δεῖ τὸν νοῦν ποιημάτων ἀκούειν.

† See Rymer's View of Tragedy, chap. 7.

the qualities of its objects, and is warmly affected with whatever it perceives. Its mimic, falſe refinement, fearful leſt any thing ſhould eſcape its notice, imagines qualities which have no exiſtence, and is extravagantly touched with the chimeras of its own creation.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of Correctneſs of Taſte.

SENSIBILITY diſpoſes us to be ſtrongly affected with whatever beauties or faults we perceive. Refinement makes us capable of diſcovering both, even when they are not obvious. *Correctneſs* muſt be ſuperadded, that we may not be impoſed upon by falſe appearances; that we may neither approve ſhining faults, nor condemn modeſt virtues; but be able to aſſign to every quality its due proportion of merit or demerit.

CORRECTNESS of taſte preſerves us from approving or diſapproving any objects but ſuch as poſſeſs the qualities which render them really laudable or blameable; and enables us to diſtinguiſh theſe qualities with accuracy from others, however ſimilar, and to ſee through the moſt artful diſguiſe that can be thrown upon them. Though we never approve, or diſapprove, when thoſe characters, which are the natural grounds of either, are known to be wanting; yet we often embrace a cloud for Juno, we miſtake the ſemblance for the ſubſtance, and, in *imagination*, attribute characters to objects, to

which they do not *in fact* belong. And then, though merely *fictitious*, they have as *real* an effect upon our ſentiments as if they were genuine; juſt as the chimerical connexion between ſpirits and darkneſs, which *prejudice* has eſtabliſhed in ſome, produces as great terror as if they were in *nature* conſtantly conjoined.

EVERY excellence is a middle between two extremes, one of which always bears ſome likeneſs to it, and is apt to be confounded with it. The right and the wrong are not ſeparated by an unconteſted boundary. Like day and night, they run inſenſibly into one another: and it is often hard to fix the preciſe point where one ends, and the other begins. In attempting it, the unſkilful may readily miſapply their cenſure or their praiſe. In every art ſublimity is mimic'd by prodigious forms, empty ſwelling, and unnatural exaggeration:

Dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captat.

Some of Homer's images, admired by Longinus as eminently great, leſs judicious critics have, notwithſtanding his authority, arraigned as monſtrous and tumid *. And many

* Such as his deſcription of Diſcord, already taken notice of, which is highly blamed by Scaliger. *Poet.* l. 5. c. 3.

paſſages

paſſages which he rejects, would have given no offence to a judge of leſs correctneſs: he condemns as extravagantly hyperbolical, the image uſed by an orator to expreſs the ſtupidity of the Athenians, "That they carried their brains in the ſoles of their feet *;" which yet Hermogenes, a critic of conſiderable accuracy, approves. The former of theſe critics charges Gorgias with the tumid for calling vultures "living ſepulchres †;" and the latter thinks the author worthy of ſuch a ſepulchre, for uſing ſo unnatural a figure ‡. But Boileau is of opinion, that it would eſcape all cenſure in poetry; and Bouhours adopts his ſentiments ‖. Lucan's extravagance, and Statius's impetuoſity, are often on the confines of true majeſty and vehemence; and Virgil's correctneſs has ſometimes drawn upon him an

* This ſentiment is aſcribed by ſome to Demoſthenes, by others to his colleague Hegeſippus. It is blamed by Longinus, περὶ ὑψ. τμη. λή. But Hermogenes, περὶ ἰδεῶν, τμ. ά. κεφ. ς'. admits it as a genuine beauty.

† Ταύτῃ δὲ τὰ τοῦ Λεοντίνου Γοργίου γελᾶται γράφοντος, γύπες ἔμψυχοι τάφοι. ΛΟΓΓ. περὶ ὕψ. τμη. γ'.

‡ Τάφους τε γὰρ ἐμψύχους τὰς γύπας λέγουσιν, ὥσπερ εἰσὶ μάλιστα ἄξιοι. ΕΡΜΟΓ. περὶ ἰδεῶν. τμ. ά. κεφ. έ.

‖ Je doute qu'elle deplû aux poëtes de notre ſiecle, et elle ne ſeroit pas en effet ſi condamnable dans les vers. *Boileau Remarq. ſur Longin.*; *Bohours, La Man. de bien penſ. dial.* 3.

acquſation

accuſation of flatneſs and enervation. Affected graces, undiſtinguiſhed glare, and falſe ornaments, border upon beauty, and ſometimes gain the preference. This very circumſtance has procured, from a florid taſte, higher approbation to the poets of modern Italy, than to thoſe of ancient Greece and Rome. Extravagance may be miſtaken for invention; ſervility, for what is natural. It is no eaſy matter, in every caſe, to place a juſt barrier betwixt poverty and ſimplicity; confuſion and agreeable intricacy; obſcurity and refinement; prolixity and copiouſneſs; languor and ſoftneſs; enervation and perſpicuity: or to diſtinguiſh the formal from the ſolemn; the exceſſive from the bold and maſterly; or the ſtiff and inſipid from the correct. Protogenes is ſaid to have rendered his pictures void of ſpirit, by extreme care to obtain correctneſs; for which he is cenſured by Apelles, as not knowing when to give over*. Cicero himſelf records and approves many turns of wit, which, to a *modern* taſte, appear low or coarſe; many of the ornaments which he recommends to an orator, would paſs with us for mere pun and quibble. In the extremes,

* Cum Protogenis opus, immenſi laboris et curæ, ſupra modum anxie miraretur, dixit omnia ſibi cum illo paria eſſe, aut illi meliora: ſed uno ſe præſtare, quod manum ille de tabula neſciret tollere; memorabili præcepto, nocere ſæpe nimiam diligentiam. *Plin. Hiſt. Nat. lib.* 35. *cap.* 10.

affectation

affectation and frigidity are very different from wit; diſtortion of thought or illiberal buffoonery, from humour; and ſcurrility or invective, from genuine ridicule: but there are particular inſtances, concerning which very good judges may heſitate, before they can aſſign them to one ſpecies or the other. Beauties and blemiſhes often ſo far reſemble in their general appearance, that an imperfect taſte may readily confound them; approving where it ſhould condemn, or blaming what merits praiſe. It is only a well-cultivated taſte, implying vigorous judgment, ſharpened by exerciſe, that can in every caſe pull off the maſk, and certainly diſtinguiſh them.

CUSTOM enables us to form ideas with exactneſs and preciſion. By ſtudying works of taſte, we acquire clear and diſtinct conceptions of thoſe qualities which render them beautiful or deformed: we take in at one glance all the eſſential properties; and thus eſtabliſh in the mind a criterion, a touchſtone of excellence and depravity. Judgment alſo becomes ſkilful by exerciſe, in determining, whether the object under conſideration perfectly agrees with this mental ſtandard. While it is unaccuſtomed to a ſubject, it may, through its own imbecility, and for want of clear ideas of the characters of the kind, miſtake reſemblance for identity; or

at

at leaſt be unable to diſtinguiſh them, without laborious application of thought, frequent trials, and great hazard of error. But when uſe has rendered any ſpecies of exertion familiar, it eaſily and infallibly diſcriminates, where-ever there is the minuteſt difference. We grow ſo well acquainted with every form, and have ideas ſo perfectly adequate, that we are ſecure againſt miſtake, when ſufficient attention is beſtowed. The real qualities of things are preſented to taſte pure and unmixed, in their genuine features and proportions, and excite ſentiments entirely congruous.

JUSTNESS of taſte extends ſtill farther than to the diſtinction of counterfeit from real. We can compare the ſentiments produced, and diſcover readily the different claſſes to which they belong. We not only feel in general *that* we are pleaſed, but perceive in *what* particular manner; not only diſcern that there is *ſome* merit, but alſo of what determinate *kind* that merit is. Though all the ſenſations of taſte are, in the higheſt degree, analogous and ſimilar; yet each has its peculiar feeling, its ſpecific form, by which one who has a diſtinct idea of it, and poſſeſſes exactneſs of judgment, may mark its difference from the others. It is this which beſtows preciſion and order on our ſentiments.

Without

Without it, they would be a mere confuſed chaos: we ſhould, like perſons in a miſt, ſee ſomething, but could not tell what we ſaw. Every good or bad quality, in the works of art or genius, would be a mere *je ne ſçai quoy*.

As a correct taſte diſtinguiſhes the *kinds*, it alſo meaſures the *degrees*, of excellence and faultineſs. Every one is conſcious of the degree of approbation or diſlike which he beſtows on objects. But ſometimes the ideas which we retain of theſe ſenſations are ſo obſcure, or our comparing faculty ſo imperfect, that we only know in general, that one gratification is higher or more intenſe than another; but cannot ſettle their *proportion*, nor even perceive the *exceſs*, except it be conſiderable. We are often better pleaſed at firſt with ſuperficial glitter, or gaudy beauty, which, having no ſolidity, become, on examination, inſipid or diſtaſteful, than with ſubſtantial merit, which will ſtand the teſt of reiterated ſcrutiny:

——— *quæ, ſi propius ſtes,*
Te capiet magis; ———
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen.

But as the perceptions of an improved taſte are always adequate to the merit of the objects; ſo an accurate judgment is ſenſible, on compariſon,

pariſon, of the leaſt diverſity in the degree of the pleaſure, or pain produced. And if we have aſcertained thoſe qualities which are the cauſes of our ſentiments, reflection on the degrees of them which things poſſeſs, will help to regulate our deciſion, and prevent our being impoſed upon by any ambiguity in our feelings; giving us both an exacter ſtandard, and an additional ſecurity againſt judging wrong.

THE accuracy of taſte may become ſo exquiſite, that it ſhall not only diſcriminate the different kinds and degrees of gratification, but alſo mark the leaſt varieties in the manner of producing it. It is this accuracy, habitually applied to works of taſte, that lays a foundation for our diſcovering the peculiar character and manner of different maſters. A capacity for this, as it implies the niceſt exactneſs, is juſtly aſſigned as an infallible proof of real and well-improved taſte.

INCORRECTNESS of taſte may ariſe, either from the dullneſs of our internal *ſenſes*, or from the debility of *judgment*. The former renders our ſentiments obſcure and ill-defined, and therefore difficult to be compared. The latter incapacitates us for perceiving the relations even of the cleareſt perceptions, or the moſt diſtinguiſhable qualities. In either caſe,

caſe, the mind is diſtracted with ſuſpenſe and doubt. This is an uneaſy ſtate, from which we are deſirous to extricate ourſelves by any means. If we have not vigour of taſte enough, to determine the merit of the object, by its intrinſic characters, we take up with any ſtandard, however foreign or improper, that can end our wavering. Authority in all its forms uſurps the place of truth and reaſon. The uſage of an admired genius will procure approbation even to *faults*, from one whoſe taſte is languid. He is unable readily to detect them; and their being committed by ſo great a maſter, and intermixed with many beauties, will keep him from even ſuſpecting that they can be wrong; and conſequently prevent his ſcrutiny. Like the ſpots of the ſun, which cannot be diſcovered by the naked eye, the faults of an eminent genius require ſomething more to enable us to diſcern them, than the elements of taſte which nature beſtows: till theſe are invigorated by culture, thoſe will diſappear in the general ſplendor. The *genius* of Shakeſpear may betray an unformed taſte into an approbation of the *barbarities* which are often mingled with his beauties. The wits of King Charles's court are ſaid to have allowed Cowley an undiſtinguiſhed admiration. One may be too much pleaſed with Congreve's wit, to remark its incongruity to the characters

to which it is aſcribed. The veneration which we have for antiquity, aided by the ſhow of learning which acquaintance with it implies, and by the malignant joy which envy feels in depretiating contemporaries, often ſtamps a value on its productions, diſproportioned to their intrinſic merit:

——— *Et niſi quæ terris ſemota, ſuiſque*
Temporibus defuncta videt, faſtidit et odit.

The opinion and example of others often recommends to us what is faſhionable or new, without our taking the pains to examine it. And their opinion is often, not founded on judgment, but dictated by intereſt, friendſhip, enmity, or party-ſpirit: "Every period of "time has produced bubbles of artificial fame, "which are kept up a while by the breath of "faſhion, and then break at once and are an-"nihilated. The learned often bewail the "loſs of ancient writers, whoſe characters "have ſurvived their works; but, perhaps, if "we could retrieve them, we ſhould find "them only the Granvilles, Montagues, "Stepneys, and Sheffields of their time, and "wonder by what infatuation or caprice they "could be raiſed to notice *." Falſe or imperfect rules, either eſtabliſhed by ourſelves, or implicitly received from others, may corrupt

* Rambler, N° 106.

rupt or conſtrain our taſte, and render our deciſions unjuſt. Had criticiſm in its infancy fallen into the hands of one in judgment and penetration inferior to Ariſtotle, a greater number of precarious and unnatural rules than are now admitted, might have long obtained an undiſputed authority. A prevailing turn and diſpoſition of mind often makes us unable to reliſh any thing but what falls in with it, and thus perverts and prejudices our judgment. Hence generally proceeds the depravity of public taſte, and the pernicious influence which it has on public entertainments and dramatic works: and hence, in a great meaſure, the connexion of the taſte of a people with their morals.

THESE corruptions of taſte can be avoided only by eſtabliſhing within ourſelves an exact ſtandard of intrinſic excellence, by which we may try whatever is preſented to us. This ſtandard will be eſtabliſhed by the careful ſtudy of the moſt correct performances of every kind, which are generally indeed the moſt excellent. But though they ſhould only riſe to mediocrity, they are fitter for laying the foundation of correctneſs, than ſuch as are far ſuperior on the whole, but faulty in ſome particulars: for the greater the beauties, the readier are the faults to debauch the taſte. Till it is formed, and has acquired conſiderable

vigour, it is dangerous to be much converſant with thoſe productions, the virtues of which are eminent, but blended with many faults. The chief utility of criticiſm lies in promoting correctneſs of taſte. In the moſt imperfect eſſays, the authority of the critic will, at leaſt, excite our attention, and provoke our inquiry. But every one who really merits the name, conveys much more momentous inſtruction, and more effectually teaches juſtneſs of thinking, by explaining the kind and degree of every excellence and blemiſh, by teaching us, what are the qualities in things to which we owe our pleaſure or diſguſt, and what the principles of human nature by which they are produced.

CARE, however, muſt be taken to preſerve our taſte unconfined, though exact; to avoid that ſcrupulous formality, often ſubſtituted for true correctneſs, which will allow no deviation from eſtabliſhed rules. To diſapprove a tranſgreſſion of a general law, when the ſpirit is obſerved, and when the end is, perhaps more effectually, promoted, is not *juſtneſs*, but *ſervility* and narrowneſs of taſte. Who will diſlike the landſcapes of Pouſſin, though he has diſregarded correctneſs of drawing in his animals? Parmegiano is ſaid by good judges to owe the inexpreſſible greatneſs of manner in his pictures, to the neglect

of

of juſt proportion in ſome of the members of his figures. A contracted taſte is chiefly incident to thoſe who would ſupply the want of natural talents by the drudgery of application. But, in every thing, the neat is eſſentially different from the finical, the exact from the preciſe, the regular from the formal.

SECT. VII.

Of the due Proportion of the Principles of Taſte.

THE laſt finiſhing and complete improvement of taſte reſults from the due proportion of its ſeveral principles, and the regular adjuſtment of all its ſentiments, according to their genuine value; ſo that none of them may ingroſs our minds, and render it inſenſible to the reſt. This is juſtneſs and correctneſs, not confined to the parts of objects, but extended to the whole. Taſte is not one ſimple power, but an aggregate of many, which, by the reſemblance of their energies, and the analogy of their ſubjects, and cauſes, readily aſſociate, and are combined. But every combination of them will not produce a perfect taſte. In all compoſitions, ſome proportion of the ingredients muſt be preſerved. A ſufficient number of members, all ſeparately regular and well formed, if either they be not of a piece with one another, or be in the organization improperly placed, will produce, not a comely and conſiſtent animal, but an incongruous monſter. In like manner, if our internal powers are diſproportioned to one another,

or not duly ſubordinated in their conjunction, we may judge well enough of ſome parts, or of particular ſubjects, but our taſte will be, upon the whole, diſtorted and irregular.

As an overgrown member, by drawing the nouriſhment from the reſt, makes them weak and puny; ſo one of the principles of taſte may, by its too great ſtrength, take from the natural force and operation of the others; and, by attaching us entirely to its own gratifications, render us too little ſenſible of theirs, though perhaps equally, or more important. If, through an exceſſive livelineſs of imagination, our ſentiments of excellence and deformity be too violent, they will ſo tranſport us, as to prevent judgment from ſcrutinizing and comparing them: our taſte may be ſenſible and feeling, but will be incorrect. A mind over fond of ſublimity, will deſpiſe the leſs elevated pleaſure which reſults from elegance and beauty. On the other hand, a ſoul devoted to the ſoft impreſſions of beauty, is unable to expand itſelf into the conception of ſublimity. A prevailing reliſh for the new, the witty, the humourous *, will render every thing inſipid which has

* Le poëte dont le talent principal eſt de rimer richement, ſe trouve bientot prévenu, que tout poëme dont les rimes

has not, or cannot, ſuitably to its nature, have theſe qualities.

THE want of due proportion is one of the moſt fertile cauſes of falſe taſte; and one of the moſt common ſources of that variety of forms and modifications which true taſte aſſumes in different perſons. Every one has a predominant turn of genius and taſte, by which his reliſh is more adapted to ſome one ſpecies of excellence than to others. This is inevitable, on account of the diverſities incident to men in the natural bent of their temper and paſſions, which always renders them peculiarly acceſſible to ſome kinds of gratification or diſguſt. According as the

rimes ſont negligées ne ſauroit être qu'un ouvrage médiocre, quoi qu'il ſoit rempli d'invention, et de ces penſées tellement convenables au ſujet, qu'on eſt ſurpris qu'elles ſoient neuves. Comme ſon talent n'eſt pas pour l'invention, ces beautés ne ſont que d'un foible poids dans ſa balance. Un peintre qui de tous les talents néceſſaires pour former le grand artiſan, n'a que celui de bien colorer, décide qu'un tableau eſt excellent, ou qu'il ne vaut rien en général, ſuivant que l'ouvrier a ſçu manier la couleur. La poëſie du tableau eſt comptée pour peu de choſe, pour rien même, dans ſon jugement. Il fait ſa déciſion ſans aucun égard aux parties de l'art qu'il n'a point. Un poëte en peinture tombera dans la même erreur, en plaçant au deſſous du médiocre, le tableau qui manquera dans l'ordonnance, et dont les expreſſions ſeront baſſes, mais dont le coloris méritera d'être admiré. *Reflex. Crit. ſur la poeſie et ſur la peinture, part* 2. § 25.

ſublime

ſublime or the humble paſſions, the grave or the lively, are predominant in the ſtructure of the ſoul, our reliſh will be keeneſt for the grand or the elegant, the ſerious or the ludicrous. In this manner, the neceſſary imperfection of human nature prevents our ever being able to eſtabliſh a proportion and œconomy of our internal ſenſes, nicely accurate in every reſpect. A ſmall diſproportion is not cenſured, becauſe it is natural: but, when it exceeds certain bounds, it is acknowledged to degenerate into a partial and diſtorted form. This diſtortion is not, however, ſo much owing to the original exceſs of one principle as to other cauſes. *That* lays the foundation of it; but *theſe* augment the natural inequality, and render it more obſervable. The principal of theſe cauſes is a narrowneſs of mind, by reaſon of which we cannot comprehend many perceptions at once, without confuſion, nor trace out their relations, and aſcertain their reſpective moment, without diſtraction and perplexity. We fix upon a part, we are ingroſſed by the ſeparate ſentiment which it excites, we are blind to the nature of the other parts, or, at leaſt, cannot extend our thoughts ſo far, as to combine them all into one conception. A due proportion of the principles of taſte, preſuppoſes the correctneſs of each, and includes, additional to that correctneſs,

neſs, an enlargement and comprehenſion of mind.

THAT it may be acquired, all the internal ſenſes muſt be equally exerciſed. If, by accidental diſuſe or perverſion, any of them has fallen below its proper tone, it muſt, by particular attention, be again wound up to it. Habitual exerciſe promotes an harmonious ſubordination of the principles of taſte, by producing a large compaſs of thought. It renders ideas and ſenſations ſo determinate and familiar, that the largeſt collections of them find room to lie diſtinctly expoſed to the mental eye; and, at the ſame time, ſtrengthens judgment to ſuch a pitch, that it can view with eaſe the moſt complicated ſubjects, and decide with accuracy concerning hem. 'Till this enlargement and extenſive amplitude of taſte is once acquired, our determinations muſt be eſſentially defective. Every art has a whole for its object: the contrivance, diſpoſition, and expreſſion of this is its main requiſite: the merit of the parts ariſes, not ſo much from their ſeparate elegance and finiſhing, as from their relations to the ſubject; and, therefore, no true judgment can be formed, even of a part, without a capacity of comprehending the whole at once, and eſtimating all its various qualities.

THOUGH

THOUGH pleaſure and pain are counterparts in taſte, our ſenſe of them may be diſproportioned and unequal. If uneaſy and gloomy paſſions preponderate in the conſtitution, and form the prevailing temper, they produce a ſuperior proneneſs to ſentiments of diſapprobation and diſlike. The chearful and pleaſurable affections, on the other hand, diffuſe a tincture over all our powers, which makes us much more ſuſceptible of admiration, than of its oppoſite. This inequality is frequently deſtructive of true taſte. A perfect and faultleſs performance is not to be expected in any art. Our gratification muſt in every caſe be balanced againſt diſguſt; beauties againſt blemiſhes: before we have compared and meaſured them, we can form no judgment of the work. For want of the quickneſs and compaſs of thought requiſite for this, or of inclination to employ it, we often err in our deciſions. Excellencies and faults are ſometimes united in the ſame part. A member may be ſo elegantly finiſhed, as to gain the applauſe of the unſkilful; but ſo unſuitable to its place, ſo prejudicial to the unity and effect of the whole, as to deſerve the ſevereſt cenſure. But in every performance, beauties and blemiſhes are to be found in different parts. A contracted mind fixes on one or the other. It is related of Apollodorus, an ancient painter, that

that he deſtroyed his fineſt pictures, if he could diſcover in them any, even the minuteſt, fault. Some critics, as if they were poſſeſſed with the ſame frantic ſpirit, will condemn a thouſand beauties of the higheſt rank, on account of a few intermingled faults, which bear no proportion to them, and do not perhaps at all affect the whole. On the contrary, the merit of a ſingle part will ſtrike a more candid judge ſo ſtrongly, as to make him overlook multitudes of faults, which infinitely overbalance it.

BUT a perſon of true taſte forms his judgment only from the ſurplus of merit, after an accurate compariſon of the perfections and the faults. And indeed the greateſt critics* allow the chief merit, not to the greater *number*, but to the higher *rank* of beauties; not to that *preciſion* and conſtant attention to every trifle which produces a cold and languid mediocrity, but to a noble *boldneſs* of genius, riſing to the height of excellence, with a kind of ſupernatural ardor which makes it negligent with regard to numberleſs *minutiæ*; in fine, not to that *faultleſs* inſipidity which eſcapes our blame, but to that daring *exaltation* which, however ſhaded by

* This ſubject is profeſſedly examined by Longinus, περὶ ὕψ. τμ. λγ.—λς.

inaccuracies,

inaccuracies, or even debaſed by the mixture of groſs tranſgreſſions, forces our admiration. Demoſthenes has been juſtly preferred to Hyperides, Archilochus to Eratoſthenes, and Pindar to Bacchylides. A man ſhould juſtly expoſe himſelf to a ſuſpicion of bad taſte, who approved a faultleſs, unintereſting tragedy, more than Othello, or King Lear; or who gave Waller greater applauſe than Dryden. Titian has been blamed for incorrectneſs of deſign; but he will ever hold a rank among painters far ſuperior to Andrea del Sarto, who finiſhed all his drawings with the moſt ſcrupulous care and diligence. Where eminent merit is found, real taſte diſdains the malignant pleaſure of prying into faults *.

—Ubi plura nitent—— non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. ——

THUS we have explained the manner in which the principles of taſte muſt be combined, to form its juſt extent; and the finiſhing which it muſt receive, in order to its per-

* On leur répond qu'un poëme ou un tableau peuvent, avec de mauvaiſes parties, etre un excellent ouvrage, &c. *Reflex. Crit. ſur la poëſie et ſur la peinture, part* 2. § 26.

fection. As it neceſſarily includes both judgment, and all the reflex ſenſes; ſo it muſt, by culture, be improved in ſenſibility, refinement, correctneſs, and the due proportion of all its parts. In whatever degree any of theſe qualities is wanting, in the ſame degree taſte muſt be imperfect. Could any critic unite them all in a great degree, to his ſentiments we might appeal, as to an unerring ſtandard of merit, in all the productions of the fine arts. The nearer one comes to a complete union of theſe qualities of taſte, the higher authority will his deciſions juſtly claim. But when none of them is wanting, a peculiar predominance of one will by no means vitiate taſte. They are ſo analogous, that an eminent degree of one will ſupply the place of another, and in ſome meaſure produce the ſame effect: or rather, perhaps, one cannot exiſt in full perfection, without implying all the reſt, at leaſt in an inferior degree. Longinus, Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, and Ariſtotle, all poſſeſſed fine taſte: but it will ſcarce be denied, that the firſt peculiarly excelled in *ſenſibility*, the ſecond in *refinement*, and the laſt in *correctneſs* and *enlargement*. There is none of the ancients, in whom all the four appear to have been more equally, or in a higher degree, combined, than in Quinctilian.

BEFORE

BEFORE we conclude our researches, it will not be amiss to explain the place which taste holds among our faculties; and to point out its genuine province, and real importance.

PART III.

The Province and Importance of Taſte.

SECT. I.

How far Taſte depends on the Imagination.

IT has been obſerved above, that thoſe internal ſenſes from which taſte is formed, are commonly referred to the *imagination*, which is conſidered as holding a middle rank between the bodily ſenſes, and the rational and moral faculties.

IT muſt be owned, that the vulgar diviſions of our faculties are generally ſuperficial and inaccurate. Our mental operations, though of all things the moſt intimately preſent to us, are of ſuch a ſubtile and tranſitory nature, that, when they are reflected on, they in a great meaſure elude our view, and their limits and diſtinctions appear involved in obſcurity and confuſion. The common diſtribution of our moſt obvious powers, our external

ternal ſenſes, is acknowledged to be faulty: much more may we expect inaccuracy, in the ordinary methods of claſſing ſuch as are leſs generally attended to. All diviſions of our derived and compounded powers muſt be liable to error, till the ſimple qualities from which they proceed, have been inveſtigated.

IT ſometimes happens, notwithſtanding, that, by a kind of natural anticipation, we ſtrike out juſter diviſions than could have been expected without reflection on the real foundation of them. This holds in the preſent caſe. If we will but recollect and compare thoſe qualities of human nature from which taſte has been explained, we ſhall be convinced, that all its phænomena proceed, either from the general laws of *ſenſation*, or from certain operations of the *imagination*. Taſte, therefore, though itſelf a ſpecies of ſenſation, is, in reſpect of its principles, juſtly reduced to imagination.

THAT taſte is properly a kind of ſenſation, can ſcarce be called in queſtion, by any one who has clear and diſtinct ideas. It ſupplies us with ſimple perceptions, entirely different from all that we receive by external ſenſe, or by reflection. Theſe make us acquainted with the forms and inherent qua-

lities of things external, and with the nature of our own powers and operations: but taſte exhibits a ſet of perceptions, which, though conſequent on theſe, are really different; which reſult from, but are not included in, the primary and direct perception of objects. They are however equally uncompounded in their feeling, as incapable of being conceived prior to experience, as immediately, neceſſarily, and regularly exhibited in certain circumſtances, as any other ſenſations whatſoever *. Taſte is ſubject-

ed

* Indeed, as our external ſenſes are *ultimate* and *original* principles, it may perhaps be taken for granted, that this circumſtance is eſſential to the idea of a ſenſe, and that no power of the mind can be properly expreſſed by this name, which is derived and compounded, and capable of being reſolved into ſimpler principles. According to this hypotheſis, the powers of taſte would not be ſenſes. To inquire, whether they are, or are not, may perhaps be deemed a diſpute about words, as the determination will depend upon the definition of a ſenſe. It is however of ſome real moment, that the powers of the mind be reduced into claſſes, according to their real differences and analogies; and, therefore, that no definition be received which would diſturb the regular diſtribution of them. And that the powers of taſte may, with the greateſt propriety, be reckoned ſenſes, though they be derived faculties, will, it is hoped, appear from the following obſervations. We are directed by the *phænomena* of our faculties, in reducing them to claſſes. The obvious phænomena of *a ſenſe* are theſe. It is a power which ſupplies us with ſuch *ſimple* perceptions, as cannot be conveyed by any other

ed to the ſame general laws which regulate our other ſenſes. To trace out all theſe would

ther channel to thoſe who are deſtitute of that ſenſe. It is a power which receives its perception *immediately*, as ſoon as its object is exhibited, previous to any reaſoning concerning the qualities of the object, or the cauſes of the perception. It is a power which exerts itſelf *independent of volition*; ſo that, while we remain in proper circumſtances, we cannot, by any act of the will, prevent our receiving certain ſenſations, nor alter them at pleaſure; nor can we, by any means, procure theſe ſenſations, as long as we are not in the proper ſituation for receiving them by their peculiar organ. Theſe are the circumſtances which characteriſe a ſenſe. Sight, for inſtance, conveys ſimple perceptions which a blind man cannot poſſibly receive. A man who opens his eyes at noon, immediately perceives light; no efforts of the will can prevent his perceiving it, while his eyes are open; and no volition could make him perceive it at midnight. Theſe characters evidently belong to all the external ſenſes, and to reflection or conſciouſneſs, by which we perceive what paſſes in our minds. They likewiſe belong to the powers of taſte: harmony, for example, is a ſimple perception, which no man who has not a muſical ear can receive, and which every one who has an ear immediately and neceſſarily receives on hearing a good tune. The powers of taſte are therefore to be reckoned ſenſes. Whether they are ultimate powers, is a ſubſequent queſtion. Thoſe who are unacquainted with philoſophy reckon all our powers ultimate qualities of the mind: but nature delights in ſimplicity, and produces numerous effects, by a few cauſes of extenſive influence; and it is the buſineſs of philoſophy to inveſtigate theſe cauſes, and to explain the phænomena from them. On inquiry, it appears, that the internal ſenſes are not ultimate principles, becauſe all their phænomena can be accounted for, by ſimpler qualities of the mind. Thus the pleaſure

would be foreign to our ſubject. We ſhall mention but one law of ſenſation, which has been

pleaſure we receive from beautiful forms is reſolveable into the pleaſure of facility, that of moderate exertion, and that which reſults from the diſcovery of art and wiſdom in the cauſe. But, notwithſtanding this inveſtigation of the cauſes of our reflex ſenſations, we may continue to term them *ſenſes*, ſince it does not contradict any of the phænomena, on account of which this name was originally beſtowed upon them. Beautiful forms have uniformity, variety, and proportion; but the pleaſure they give us, is an immediate ſenſation, prior to our analyſing them, or diſcovering by reaſon that they have theſe qualities. We find, on examination, that uniformity and proportion are agreeable, as they enable us to conceive the object with facility; and variety, as it hinders this facility from degenerating into langour; and that all of them are agreeable, as being indications of art and ſkill; and thence we conclude, that the pleaſant ſentiment of beauty is the reſult of thoſe ſimple principles which diſpoſe us to reliſh moderate facility, and moderate difficulty, and to approve intelligence and deſign; but the ſentiment of beauty ariſes, without our reflecting on this mixture. This ſentiment is compound in its *principles*, but perfectly ſimple in its *feeling*. If this ſhould ſeem to imply a contradiction, let it be remembered, that two liquors of different flavours may, by their mixture, produce a third flavour, which ſhall excite in the palate a ſenſation as ſimple as that which it receives from any of the ingredients. In like manner, the perception of whiteneſs is as ſimple as that of any colour; but philoſophers know, that, in reſpect of its cauſe, it is compounded of the ſeven primary colours. Lord Verulam (*Nov. Org. lib. 2. aph. 26.*) concludes, from ſome experiments, that the external ſenſe of taſte is compounded of ſmell and touch. Suppoſe this concluſion juſt, taſte would be a derived power; but ſtill

it

been ſo often hinted at already, and which, by its immediate effects and its remoter conſequences, has ſo great influence on the ſentiments of taſte, that it will be proper in a few words to illuſtrate it. The law of ſenſation which we have in view, is this: When an object is preſented to any of our ſenſes, the mind conforms itſelf to its nature and appearance, feels an emotion, and is put in a frame ſuitable and analogous; of which we have a perception by conſciouſneſs or reflection. Thus,

it would be a diſtinct ſenſe, as its perceptions are peculiar, and ſpecifically different in their feeling both from odours and tangible qualities. Juſt ſo, each principle of taſte is with reaſon accounted a particular ſenſe, becauſe its perceptions, however produced, are peculiar to it, and ſpecifically different from all others. Each conveys perceptions, which, in reſpect of their feeling, are original, though the powers, by which they are conveyed, are derived. It is ſcarce neceſſary to obſerve, that our aſcribing the ſentiments of taſte to mental proceſſes is totally different from aſſerting that they are deductions of reaſon. We do not prove, that certain objects are grand by arguments, but we perceive them to be grand in conſequence of the natural conſtitution of our mind, which diſpoſes us, without reflection, to be pleaſed with largeneſs and ſimplicity. Reaſoning may, however, be employed in exhibiting an object to the mind; and yet the perception that it has, when the object is once exhibited, may properly belong to a ſenſe. Thus, reaſoning may be neceſſary to aſcertain the circumſtances, and determine the motive, of an action; but it is the moral ſenſe that perceives it to be either virtuous or vicious, after reaſon has diſcovered its motive and its circumſtances.

difficulty

difficulty produces a conſciouſneſs of a grateful exertion of energy; facility, of an even and compoſed motion of ſoul; excellence, perfection, or ſublimity, begets an enlargement of mind, and conſcious pride; deficience or imperfection, a depreſſion of ſoul, and painful humility. This adapting of the mind to its preſent object, is the *immediate* cauſe of many of the pleaſures and the pains of taſte which have been pointed out: and, by its *conſequences*, it augments or diminiſhes many others. It is chiefly owing, for inſtance, to this law of ſenſation, that we find it difficult to diſmiſs, at once, any object which hath ingroſſed our thoughts, and to turn in an inſtant to another *. Every employment of the mind is attended with a correſpondent diſpoſition; every object exhibited produces a ſuitable action of the mind. Now, though the actions of the mind often ſucceed one another with ſurpriſing quickneſs, they are not inſtantaneous: it requires ſome time to paſs from one diſpoſition to another. Every frame of mind has a kind of firmneſs, tenacity, or obſtinacy, which renders it averſe to quit its hold. Every ſenſation or emotion, as much as poſſible, reſiſts diminution or extinction. Whenever, therefore, we attempt

* Difficile eſt mutare habitum animi ſemel conſtitutum. *Quint. Inſt. Orat. lib. 4. cap. 2.*

to

to baniſh an object which has engaged our notice, the congruous diſpoſition which it had excited tends continually to recall it to our thoughts, and to interrupt our attention to a new object. Nay, farther, even after an object is removed, the frame which it produced, the *impetus* which it gave the mind, continues, and urges us to go on in the ſame direction; it requires time and labour to deſtroy it. For this reaſon, if the ſucceeding object demand a different conformation of mind, our application to it muſt be leſs vigorous, and its impreſſion fainter: but, if it be analogous to the preceding, it finds the ſuitable diſpoſition already raiſed; and therefore ſtrikes the ſenſe with all its force. The influence of this on the ſentiments of taſte, we have had occaſion to remark in many inſtances. Hence, for example, the mighty efficacy which perceptions acquire in poetry or eloquence, by being introduced in a proper order, and with due preparation. Hence the influence of an habitual and prevailing temper or turn of mind, in enlivening congruous perceptions, and in debilitating ſuch as are incongruous. As far as the ſentiments of taſte depend on theſe, or ſimilar principles, ſo far they ariſe immediately from the general laws of ſenſation.

WE can explain our external ſenſes no otherwiſe, than by marking their differences, reducing

reducing them to claſſes, and delineating the laws of exertion common to all, or peculiar to each. They are original qualities of human nature, not reſolveable into any others more ultimate and ſimple; but taſte, in moſt of its forms at leaſt, is a derivative and ſecondary power. We can trace it up to ſimpler principles, by pointing out the mental proceſs that produces it, or enumerating the qualities by the combination of which it is formed. Theſe are found, on inquiry, to be no other than certain exertions of *imagination*. That this may become more obvious, we ſhall briefly aſcertain the nature and extent of imagination, by exhibiting a detail of its principal operations, as far as they concern the preſent ſubject.

IMAGINATION is, firſt of all, employed in preſenting ſuch ideas as are not attended with *remembrance*, or a conviction of their having been formerly in the mind. This conviction, which we call *remembrance*, is what diſtinguiſhes memory from all our other powers of perception. When I ſee any object, a ſhip ſuppoſe, for the firſt time, ſenſe alone is exerciſed in perceiving it; when I think of a golden mountain for the firſt time, imagination alone is employed: when I ſee the ſhip again, and know that I had ſeen it before, memory is exerciſed

erciſed about it, in conjunction with ſenſe; when I think of the golden mountain a ſecond time, and perceive that I had thought of it before, then memory, as well as imagination, is exerted. Imagination exhibits ideas of many objects which we never perceived, the conception of which, therefore, cannot be attended with remembrance. But even things which we have often formerly perceived, and which are moſt familiar to us, may be thought upon without our reflecting that we have perceived them formerly: we can ſimply conceive heat or cold, light or colour; or we can conſider them, not as what we have perceived in time paſt, but as what we may hereafter perceive. In this caſe, they are preſented, not by memory, but by imagination.

MEMORY exhibits its ideas in the ſame form and order which belonged to the things perceived by ſenſe. But the defect of remembrance in the ideas of imagination, as it prevents our referring them to their original ſenſations, diſſolves the natural connexion of their parts. But when *memory* has loſt their real bonds of union, *fancy*, by its aſſociating power, confers upon them new ties, that they may not lie perfectly looſe; and it can range them in an endleſs variety of forms. When I recollect a city which I have lately ſeen, and conceive the ſeveral objects belonging to it,

in the ſame order and poſitions in which I ſaw them; this is the work of memory. Several years after, I try to form an idea of the ſame city; I have forgotten many particulars; imagination attempts to ſupply the defects of memory, and forms a picture of it in many reſpects different from the truth, varying the magnitudes, the diſtances, and the order of the objects: if I have occaſion to viſit it afterwards, I become ſenſible of this, and am ſurpriſed to find how great a part of my conception was the mere creation of fancy. When I hear of a city which I never ſaw, I endeavour to conceive it, and imagination gives its parts certain proportions, and combines them in a certain form.

MANY of the combinations of ideas which imagination produces, are repreſentations of nothing that exiſts in nature; and therefore whatever is fictitious or chimerical is acknowledged to be the offspring of this faculty, and is termed *imaginary*. But wild and lawleſs as this faculty appears to be, it commonly obſerves certain general rules, aſſociating chiefly ideas of ſuch objects as are connected by the ſimple relations of *reſemblance*, *contrariety*, or *vicinity*; or by the more complex ties of *cuſtom*, *co-exiſtence*, *cauſation*, or *order*. It ſometimes *preſumes*, that ideas have theſe relations, when they have them not: but

but generally it diſcovers them where they are: and by this means it becomes the cauſe of many of our moſt important operations *.

WHERE-EVER fancy ſuppoſes, or perceives in ideas, any of the uniting qualities juſt now mentioned, it readily, and with a kind of eagerneſs, paſſes from one idea to its aſſociates. Thus, the picture of a friend tranſports the mind in an inſtant, by means of reſemblance, to the conception of that friend; and it introduces the recollection of many particulars in his character and conduct, by means of the relation which they bear to him as their cauſe. This effect might be illuſtrated by many obvious examples, with reſpect to all the aſſociating qualities. Ideas to which they belong, are often ſo ſtrongly connected by the imagination, that they become almoſt inſeparable, and generally appear together. When one of them is conceived, no force can prevent the other from ruſhing into the mind. Many inſtances of this are obſer-

* For inſtance, ſome ideas are of ſuch a nature, that whenever they occur, they impel to action. It is by making ſuch ideas frequently occur, by conſtantly ſuggeſting them, in conſequence of the aſſociating power of *cuſtom*, that repetition produces the conſtant tendency and proneneſs to a particular action which is an eſſential part of every *active habit*.

vable every day; particularly in the prejudices, the attachments, and the antipathies of men: and there have occurred, in the former parts of this eſſay, many inſtances of objects which pleaſe, or diſpleaſe taſte, only, or chiefly, by means of ideas which are aſſociated with them, and ſuggeſted by them; as in the ſublimity of works of art, and in ſeveral kinds of beauty.

ONE of the moſt natural and immediate effects of aſſociation is, that, eſpecially when the relation of ideas is cloſe, and their union conſequently ſtrong, the tranſition from one to the other is ſo eaſy, that the mind takes in a long train of related ideas with no more labour than is requiſite for viewing a ſingle perception, and runs over the whole ſeries with ſuch quickneſs, as to be ſcarce ſenſible that it is ſhifting its objects. Hence it ariſes, that before we take notice of our having begun to wander, we often find, that we have departed very far from the ſubject which we were conſidering, and on which we perhaps did our utmoſt to keep our attention fixed: and when we ſet ourſelves to inquire, how this has happened, we can ſometimes recollect a ſucceſſion of many ideas, which have paſſed through the mind with ſo great facility, that we did not at all obſerve them. Nay, we ſometimes paſs ſo eaſily from one perception

to

to another which it ſuggeſts, that it requires pains to make us ſenſible of the former. We attend little, for inſtance, to the ſounds or characters of a language which we perfectly underſtand; our whole attention is beſtowed on the things ſignified by them. Many of the perceptions of ſight which ſuggeſt ideas of tangible qualities, are never almoſt reflected on. This eaſy tranſition from one perception to others aſſociated with it, has been diſcovered to have a very extenſive and multifarious influence on the ſentiments of taſte. Whenever our pleaſure ariſes from ideas aſſociated with an object, and ſuggeſted by it, it is their being inſtantaneouſly ſuggeſted that renders the object ſtriking; and very many of the pleaſures of taſte are of this kind: were force neceſſary for bringing them into view, it would diſturb the operations of the ſoul, and deſtroy all our pleaſure. We ſcarce at all perceive the excellencies or the blemiſhes of a poem or oration written in a language which we underſtand but imperfectly: the difficulty which we find in paſſing from the words to the thoughts expreſſed by them, prevents the exertion of the powers of taſte. In painting, if the features, the attitudes, and the diſpoſition of the figures, do not ſuggeſt the ſubject very quickly, and without tedious ſtudy, taſte becomes dull, and the pleaſure is loſt.

IMAGINATION proceeds a ſtep farther: When a number of diſtinct ideas are firmly and intimately connected, it even combines them into a whole, on account of the facility with which all the groupe is taken in, and conſiders them as all together compoſing only one perception. This is the origin of all our complex perceptions. It is fancy which thus beſtows unity on number, and unites things into one image, which, in themſelves, and in their appearance to the ſenſes, are diſtinct and ſeparate. By this operation too, fancy has great influence on taſte: for all the objects that affect taſte, and excite its ſentiments, are certain forms or pictures made by fancy, certain parts or qualities of things which it combines into complex modes.

IDEAS which are thus compounded, or which are, even without compoſition, only aſſociated, communicate, by the cloſeneſs of their relation, their qualities to one another. A perception, by being connected with another that is ſtrong, or pleaſant, or painful, becomes itſelf vigorous, agreeable, or diſagreeable. The parts of complex perceptions are ſo intimately united, that the generality ſeldom reflect on their being diſtinct; and philoſophers cannot analyſe them without ſome ſtudy and attention. We are accuſtomed to conſider them all as making but one

one perception; they are all in the mind at once; and therefore we cannot naturally diſtinguiſh from what preciſe part of a complex perception a particular ſentiment reſults, but muſt aſcribe the ſentiments ariſing from any of the parts to the perception in general. When a perception communicates its qualities to another introduced by it, the reaſon of the phænomenon is obvious from the principles which we have eſtabliſhed. The diſpoſition with which the mind contemplated the firſt, has a degree of firmneſs which makes force requiſite to deſtroy or change it; the ſtrength of the union which tranſports the mind eaſily from the one perception to the others, keeps this force from being applied: the diſpoſition, therefore, which the firſt produced, continues while we view the others; and we imagine, by a kind of illuſion, that they produced the diſpoſition which, in reality, was brought to the perception of them; and we aſcribe to them the qualities which are neceſſary for its production. Finally, a perception weak, or indifferent in itſelf, is ſometimes rendered ſtrong, or pleaſant, or painful, by its introducing an idea which has theſe qualities. A perception which is indifferent, may, notwithſtanding, be fit to engage our attention, either on account of thoſe which accompany it, or on account of the effects of thoſe qualities of things which it repreſents,

repreſents, or for ſome other reaſon. Thus perceptions of touch, which are neither pleaſant nor painful, engage our attention, becauſe of the great dependence which our welfare or our hurt have on the tangible qualities of bodies. But a perception which is indifferent, excites no emotion; and the indifference with which it was contemplated, is readily ſwallowed up by any emotion that happens to ſucceed it. In this caſe our attention continues fixed on the perception itſelf; but the frame with which it was contemplated, is ſcarce felt, and is quickly forgotten. On the other hand, a perception may be ſuch as in itſelf we are not apt to attend to, and yet may, by its ſtrength, its agreeableneſs, or its diſagreeableneſs, excite a very ſenſible emotion, which engages our notice, and remains for ſome time in the mind. Now, when a perception of the firſt kind introduces one of the ſecond kind, the frame with which the former perception is conceived, and the latter perception itſelf, are diſregarded; and the former perception, and the emotion excited by the latter, being the principal objects of our notice, we naturally conjoin them, and aſcribe the emotion to that perception which did not really excite it, but only introduced its immediate cauſe. From the fitneſs of aſſociated perceptions to communicate their qualities, particularly their

ſtrength

ſtrength or vivacity to each other, ariſes, in a great meaſure, the force of ſympathy, which enlivens our *ideas* of the paſſions infuſed by it to ſuch a pitch, as in a manner converts them into the paſſions themſelves, and which affects the perceptions of taſte in many inſtances formerly remarked.

IF indeed the connected perceptions have ſuch a degree of relation as unavoidably leads us to compare them, the phænomenon that has been mentioned will be reverſed, the effect of the *compariſon* overbalancing that of the *aſſociation*. A perception will appear leſs ſtrong, leſs pleaſant, or leſs painful, than it really is, by being introduced by one which poſſeſſes a greater degree of theſe qualities, if it is at the ſame time compared with it.

IMAGINATION ſometimes operates ſo ſtrongly, as not only to aſſociate, or even combine, but alſo to confound together ideas or ſenſations that are related, and to make us miſtake one for the other. This is the cauſe of our often aſcribing the pleaſure or the pain which reſults merely from our own operations, to the objects about which they happen to be employed; and of our confounding together objects or ideas which are contemplated with the ſame or a like diſpoſition. It is likewiſe the ſource of many figures

gures in which one thing is uſed for another, as metaphor, denomination, ~~alluſion,~~ and the like.

IMAGINATION does not confine itſelf to its own weak ideas; but often acts in conjunction with our ſenſes, and ſpreads its influence on their impreſſions. Senſations, emotions, and affections, are, by its power, aſſociated with others, readily introducing ſuch as reſemble them, either in their feeling or direction. Nay, they are capable of a cloſer union than even our ideas; for they may not only, like them, be *conjoined*, but alſo *mixed* and blended ſo perfectly together, that none of them ſhall be diſtinctly perceivable in the compound which ariſes from their union. Hence the effects ſo often mentioned, of concomitant emotions.

ALL theſe are operations of imagination, which naturally proceed from its ſimpleſt exertions; and theſe are the principles from which the ſentiments of taſte ariſe. That theſe ſentiments ariſe from imagination, does by no means imply, that they are fantaſtical, imaginary, or unſubſtantial. They are *univerſally* produced by the energies of fancy, which are indeed of the utmoſt conſequence, and have the moſt extenſive influence on the operations of the mind. By being

being compounded with one another, or with other original qualities of human nature, they generate moſt of our compounded powers. In particular, they produce *affection* and *taſte* of every kind; the former, by operating in conjunction with thoſe qualities of the mind which fit us for action; the latter, by being combined with the general laws of ſenſation.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of the Connexion of Taſte with Genius.

TASTE may be conſidered either as an eſſential *part*, or as a neceſſary *attendant* of genius, according as we conſider genius in a more or leſs extenſive manner. Every one acknowledges, that they have a very near connexion. It is ſo evident, that it has almoſt paſſed into a maxim, That the ableſt performers are alſo the beſt judges in every art. How far the maxim is juſt, will beſt appear, by briefly determining the nature and principles of genius.

THE firſt and leading quality of genius is *invention*, which conſiſts in a great extent and comprehenſiveneſs of imagination, in a readineſs of aſſociating the remoteſt ideas that are any way related. In a man of genius, the uniting principles are ſo vigorous and quick, that, whenever any idea is preſent to the mind, they bring into view at once all others that have the leaſt connexion with it. As the magnet ſelects, from a quantity of matter, the ferruginous particles which happen to be ſcattered through it, without making

making an impreſſion on other ſubſtances; ſo imagination, by a ſimilar ſympathy, equally inexplicable, draws out from the whole compaſs of nature ſuch ideas as we have occaſion for, without attending to any others; and yet preſents them with as great propriety, as if all poſſible conceptions had been explicitly expoſed to our view, and ſubjected to our choice.

At firſt, theſe materials may lie in a rude and indigeſted chaos: but when we attentively review them, the ſame aſſociating power which formerly made us ſenſible of their connexion, leads us to perceive the different degrees of that connexion; by its magical force ranges them into different ſpecies, according to theſe degrees; diſpoſes the moſt ſtrongly related into the ſame member; and ſets all the members in that poſition which it points out as the moſt natural. Thus, from a confuſed heap of materials, collected by fancy, genius, after repeated reviews and tranſpoſitions, deſigns a regular and well-proportioned whole *.

This brightneſs and force of imagination

* This operation of genius, in deſigning its productions, is deſcribed with all the beauties of poetical expreſſion, in *The pleaſures of Imagination*, *b.* 3. *ver.* 348. *to* 410.

throws a luſtre on its effects which will for ever diſtinguiſh them from the lifeleſs and inſipid productions of inanimated induſtry. Diligence and acquired abilities may aſſiſt or improve genius: but a fine imagination alone can produce it. Hence is derived its inventive power in all the ſubjects to which it can be applied. This is poſſeſſed in common by the muſician, the painter, the poet, the orator, the philoſopher, and even the mathematician. In each, indeed, its form has ſomething peculiar, ariſing either from the degree of extent and comprehenſion of fancy; or from the peculiar prevalence of ſome one of the aſſociating qualities; or from the mind being, by original conſtitution, education, example, or ſtudy, more ſtrongly turned to one kind than the others.

A GENIUS for the fine arts implies, not only the power of invention or deſign, but likewiſe a capacity to expreſs its deſigns in apt materials. Without this, it would not only be imperfect, but would for ever lie latent, undiſcovered, and uſeleſs. It is chiefly the peculiar modification of this capacity which adapts a genius to one art rather than another. To form a painter, the ideas aſſembled by fancy muſt give him a view of their correſpondent objects, in ſuch order and proportion as will enable him to exhibit the

the original to the eye, by an imitation of its figure and colour. To form a poet, they muſt lead the thoughts, not to the corporeal forms of things, but to the ſigns with which, by the common uſe of language, they are connected; ſo that he may employ them with propriety, force, and harmony, in exciting ſtrong ideas of his ſubject.

CULTURE may ſtrengthen invention; knowledge is neceſſary for ſupplying a fund from which it may collect its materials; but improvement chiefly affects the capacity of expreſſion. Painting requires a mechanical ſkill, produced by exerciſe; muſic, a knowledge of the power of ſounds, derived from experience; poetry and eloquence, an acquaintance with all the force of words and inſtituted ſigns, an advantage which can be obtained only by careful ſtudy.

THUS genius is the grand architect which not only chuſes the materials, but diſpoſes them into a regular ſtructure. But it is not able to finiſh it by itſelf. It needs the aſſiſtance of taſte, to guide and moderate its exertions. Though the different relations of the parts, in ſome meaſure, determine the form and poſition of each, we acquire much ampler aſſurance of its rectitude, when taſte has reviewed and examined both the deſign

and execution. It ſerves as a check on mere fancy; it interpoſes its judgment, either approving or condemning; and rejects many things which unaſſiſted genius would have allowed.

THE diſtinct provinces of genius and taſte being thus marked out, it will be eaſy to diſcover how far they are connected. They muſt be connected in a conſiderable degree, ſince they both ſpring from imagination: but as it is differently exerted in each, their connexion will not be perfectly accurate and uniform.

GENIUS is not always attended with taſte preciſely equal and proportioned. It is ſometimes incorrect, though copious and extenſive. It is ſometimes bold, yet can transfuſe no delicacy or grace into its productions. But it is never found where taſte is altogether wanting. The ſame vigour of the aſſociating principles which renders genius quick and comprehenſive, muſt beſtow ſuch ſtrength on the ſeveral dependent operations of fancy which generate taſte, as ſhall make that faculty conſiderably active and perceptive *. The

* There is in one view a ſtill cloſer connexion between genius and taſte. A genius for the fine arts implies, at leaſt, *ſenſibility* and *delicacy* of taſte, as an eſſential part

The genius of the greateſt maſters in every kind has not been more perfect than their taſte. The models they have given are ſo finiſhed and correct, that the general rules and precepts of the art, afterwards eſtabliſhed by critics, are deduced from their practice, and the very ſame which they obſerved, though uninſtructed. The epos was not ſubjected to rules when Homer compoſed the Iliad. Ariſtotle did not write his *Art of Poetry*, till after the greateſt tragic poets of antiquity had flouriſhed. Theſe great originals poſſeſſed not only an excellent genius, but equal taſte. The vigour of their imaginations led them into unexplored tracks; and they had ſuch light and diſcernment, as, without danger of error, directed their courſe in this untrodden wilderneſs. Taſte, united with genius, renders the effects of the latter like to diamonds, which have as great ſolidity as ſplendour *.

BUT

of it. By means of this, every form ſtrikes a man of true genius ſo forcibly, as perfectly to enrapture and engage him, and he ſelects the circumſtances proper for characteriſing it, and impreſſes them upon others, with the ſame vivacity that he apprehends them himſelf. See this elegantly explained in *A diſcourſe on poetical imitation*, § 1.

* Le bel eſprit eſt de la nature de ces pierres precieuſes, qui n'ont pas moins de ſolidité, que d'éclat. Il n'y a

BUT taſte often prevails where genius is wanting; they may judge, who cannot themſelves perform. The operations that depend on the imagination, may be vigorous enough to form a high reliſh, though it be deſtitute of that brightneſs and extenſion which is neceſſary for a comprehenſive genius. The aſſociating principles may be ſtrong and active within their bounds, though theſe bounds be narrow. And ſoundneſs and ſtrength of judgment may be poſſeſſed without conſiderable genius; but muſt always, if joined with any degree of the internal ſenſes, produce acuteneſs and juſtneſs of taſte. This rendered Ariſtotle the greateſt of critics, though he was not, like Longinus, *bleſt with a poet's fire.*

IT muſt however be acknowledged, that genius will always throw a peculiar brightneſs upon taſte, as it enables one, by a kind of contagion, to catch the ſpirit of an author, to judge with the ſame diſpoſition in which he compoſed, and by this means to feel every

rien de plus beau qu'un diamant bien poli et bien net; il eclate de tous coтez, et dans toutes ſes parties.

Quanta ſodezza, tanto ha ſplendore.

C'eſt un corps ſolide qui brille; c'eſt un brillant qui a de la conſiſtence et du corps. 4 *Entret. d'Ariſte et d'Eugene.*

beauty

beauty with a delight and tranſport of which a colder critic can form no idea. The fine genius of Longinus catches fire, as it were, from the mentioning of a ſublime paſſage, and hurries him on to emulate its ſublimity in his explication of it. Quintilian, by the ſame union of genius with taſte, delivers his ſentiments with the utmoſt elegance, and enlivens the abſtractneſs of precept by the moſt beautiful and appoſite figures and images.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of the influence of Taſte on Criticiſm.

AS taſte gives the laſt finiſhing to genius in the *author* or performer, ſo it is the fundamental ingredient in the character of the *critic*. The greateſt refinement and juſtneſs of taſte is neceſſary, but not alone ſufficient, to qualify one for this office. A critic muſt not only *feel*, but poſſeſs that accuracy of diſcernment, which enables a perſon to *reflect* upon his feelings with diſtinctneſs, and to explain them to others.

TASTE perceives the particular beauties and faults, and thus ſupplies the facts for which we are to account, and the experiments from which our concluſions are to be deduced. But theſe concluſions cannot be formed without a vigorous abſtracting faculty, the greateſt force of reaſon, a capacity for the moſt careful and correct induction, and a deep knowledge of the principles of human nature. One does not merit the name of a critic, merely by being able to make a collection of beauties and faults from performances in the fine arts; to tell in general, that

that thoſe pleaſe, theſe diſpleaſe; ſome more, ſome leſs. Such particular obſervations fall as much ſhort of genuine criticiſm, as a collection of facts and experiments does of philoſophy; or a ſeries of news-papers of a ſyſtem of politics. They are its rude materials, and nothing more. And to exhibit them is the whole that taſte can do.

In order, therefore, to form an able critic, taſte muſt be attended with a philoſophical genius, which may ſubject theſe materials to a regular induction, reduce them into claſſes, and determine the general rules which govern them *. In all this operation, reſpect muſt be had to the ſubjects in which the excellencies or blemiſhes reſide, and to the ſimilitude of the qualities themſelves, or of the ſentiments which they excite. Theſe are the circumſtances common to a variety of particular phænomena, which muſt regulate our diſtribution of them. It is not enough to diſcover

* Nihil eſt quod ad artem redigi poſſit, niſi ille prius, qui illa tenet, quorum artem inſtituere vult, habeat illam ſcientiam, ut ex iis rebus, quarum ars nondum ſit, artem efficere poſſit.——Omnia fere, quæ ſunt concluſa nunc artibus, diſperſa et diſſipata quondam fuerunt, ut in muſicis; — in hac denique ipſa ratione dicendi. —— Adhibita eſt igitur ars quædam extrinſecus ex alio genere quodam, quod ubi totum *philoſophi* aſſumunt, quæ rem diſſolutam, divulſamque conglutinaret, et ratione quadam conſtringeret. *Cic. de Orat. lib.* 1.

that

that we are pleaſed or diſpleaſed; we muſt aſcertain the preciſe ſpecies of either; and refer it to the ſentiment or the expreſſion; to the deſign or the execution; to ſublimity or beauty; to wit or humour.

THE qualities common to the lower claſſes will naturally be determined firſt, by regular induction. But a true critic will not reſt ſatisfied with them. By renewing the induction, and puſhing it to a greater degree of ſubtilty, he will aſcertain the leſs conſpicuous properties, which unite ſeveral inferior ſpecies under the ſame genus *; and will carry on his analyſis, till he diſcovers the higheſt kinds, and preſcribes the moſt extenſive laws of art, and thus arrives at the moſt univerſal diſtinctions that can be made, without falling into the uninſtructive affirmation of mere excellence or faultineſs in general †.

To

* Tum ſunt notanda genera, et ad certum numerum paucitatemque revocanda. Genus autem eſt id, quod ſui ſimileis communione quadam, ſpecie autem differenteis, duas aut plureis complectitur parteis. Partes autem ſunt, quæ generibus iis, ex quibus emanant, ſubjiciuntur. *Cic. ibid.*

† This order of proceeding from the more particular to the more general diſtinctions of our ſentiments, may, perhaps, ſeem liable to an objection drawn from matter of fact: for it would appear, that critics have determined the moſt univerſal claſſes, but have not yet ſufficiently aſcertained

To complete the criticiſm, and render it truly philoſophical, the common qualities of the

certained the ſpecies that are ſubordinate to them. The common defect with which they are charged is, that their obſervations are too general. This is undoubtedly the caſe, as criticiſm has been generally managed: and the reaſon is, that it has been ſeldom cultivated by a regular and juſt induction. It was long ago obſerved by Lord Verulam, that there are two kinds of induction; one imperfect and inſufficient, which leads us at once from experiments to the moſt general concluſions; the other legitimate and perfect, but ſcarce ever uſed, which riſes gradually from leſs general, to more general principles. "Duæ viæ ſunt, atque eſſe poſſunt, ad inquirendam et "inveniendam veritatem. Altera a ſenſu et particularibus "advolat ad axiomata maxime generalia, —— atque hæc "via in uſu eſt. Altera a ſenſu et particularibus excitat "axiomata, aſcendendo continenter et gradatim, ut ulti-"mo loco perveniatur ad maxime generalia; quæ via vera "eſt, ſed intentata." *Nov. Org. lib.* 1. *aph.* 19. In criticiſm, as well as in philoſophy, the former method has been generally practiſed. Indeed, in whatever regards ſentiment, there is a peculiar temptation to purſue this courſe. For the very feelings excited by qualities that belong to different *genera*, being ſenſibly diſtinct, direct men, in ſome meaſure, to diſtinguiſh them, though not with ſufficient preciſion. But it requires attention and acuteneſs to mark the ſmaller varieties of ſentiment, which correſpond to the ſpecies of each. The matter of fact objected only ſhows, therefore, that criticiſm has been cultivated by a wrong method of induction. The conſequence has been, that even thoſe general diſtinctions which appear to be aſcertained, are looſe, uncertain, and ill defined; a defect that can never be remedied, till the other ſort of induction be applied, and critics be contented to riſe from particular principles, gradually, to ſuch as

are

the ſeveral claſſes, both ſuperior and ſubordinate, muſt be compared with the principles of human nature, that we may learn by what means they pleaſe or diſpleaſe, and for what reaſon.

ALL this is included in perfect criticiſm, which requires therefore the greateſt philoſophical acuteneſs, united with the moſt exquiſite perfection of taſte. If taſte is wanting, our concluſions muſt be defective, faulty, or precarious; if philoſophical genius, our obſervations will be trifling, ſuperficial, unconnected, and perplexed with too great particularity.

IT has often been obſerved, that nature is the ſtandard and archetype of all true rules of criticiſm. Indeed the fate of criticiſm has been ſimilar to that of every ſpecies of philoſophy: It has fallen into the hands of incapable profeſſors, who, without any regard to the truth of nature, have attempted to preſcribe rules formed by their own imaginations. The accidental uſage of an eminent author on a particular emergency, has been converted into a ſtanding law, and applied to

are more general. Thus only can our conceptions of all the ſentiments of taſte, and of the qualities by which they are excited, be rendered accurate and determinate.

caſes

caſes nowiſe ſimilar: arbitrary reſtraints have been impoſed without neceſſity, and even ſhining faults have been recommended as beauties. But theſe falſe ſyſtems of criticiſm, like their kindred ones in philoſophy, have obtained only a local and temporary reception. Genuine criticiſm is evidently very different; and is juſtly eſteemed a faithful tranſcript of nature. For it inveſtigates thoſe qualities in its objects which, from the invariable principles of human nature, muſt always pleaſe or diſpleaſe; deſcribes and diſtinguiſhes the ſentiments which they in fact produce; and impartially regulates its moſt general concluſions according to real phænomena.

SECT. IV.

Of the Objects of Taſte.

WE have ſeen the importance of taſte, both to the performer, and the judge. But its proper office and extenſive influence will perhaps appear ſtill farther, by conſidering its objects in a light ſomewhat different. It may be conceived as employing itſelf about *nature*, *art*, and *ſcience*. With regard to nature, which is the common ſubject of the other two, taſte and reaſon are employed in conjunction. In art, taſte is the ultimate judge, and reaſon but its miniſter. In ſcience, reaſon is ſupreme, but may ſometimes reap advantage from uſing taſte as an auxiliary.

As reaſon inveſtigates the *laws* of nature, taſte alone diſcovers its *beauties*. It fills us with admiration of the ſtupendous magnitude of the mundane ſyſtem. It is charmed with the regularity, order, and proportion, which every part of that ſyſtem diſplays, even to the moſt illiterate; with the beauty and variety of colours which tinge the face of nature; with the fitneſs and utility of all its productions; with the inexhauſtible diverſity and endleſs ſucceſſion

ſucceſſion of new objects which it preſents to view. Flowers diſcloſe a thouſand delicate or vivid hues. Animals appear in comely ſymmetry. Here the ocean ſpreads forth its ſmooth and boundleſs ſurface; there the earth forms a verdant carpet. Mountains riſe with rugged majeſty; the valleys wear a pleaſant bloom; and even the dreary wilderneſs is not deſtitute of auguſt ſimplicity. The day is uſhered in by a ſplendid luminary, whoſe beams expoſe to view the beauties of the world, and gild the face of nature. And when the curtain of night veils terreſtrial objects from our eye, the wide expanſe appears ſpangled with ſtars, and opens the proſpect of multitudes of worlds paſt reckoning. Spring, ſummer, autumn, preſent us with natural beauties, in the ſucceſſive periods of their growth; and even ſtern winter leaves many objects undeſtroyed, from which a vigorous taſte may extract no inconſiderable degree of entertainment.

Scarce any art is ſo mean, ſo entirely mechanical, as not to afford ſubjects of taſte. Dreſs, furniture, equipage, will diſcover a good or bad taſte: nay, the loweſt utenſil may be beautiful or ugly in the kind *. But the

* In how great a degree the beauty of theſe meaner ſubjects is regulated by the ſame principles, from which that of the nobler ſprings, appears in many inſtances produced by Mr Hogarth, in his *Analyſis of beauty*.

finer arts, which imitate the excellencies of nature, ſupply it with more proper materials, and thence derive their merit. Muſic, painting, ſtatuary, architecture, poetry, and eloquence, conſtitute its peculiar and domeſtic territory, in which its authority is abſolutely ſupreme. In this department, genius receives its decrees with implicit ſubmiſſion; and reaſon is but its miniſter, employed to bring into view, and reduce into form, the ſubjects of which it is to judge.

THE ſciences are ſuſceptible, not only of truth or falſehood, but alſo of beauty or deformity, excellence or defect. As the former are primarily regarded, reaſon, by which they are diſtinguiſhed, here reigns ſupreme, and is the immediate and proper judge of merit. Taſte exerciſes only a ſubordinate juriſdiction, and muſt be employed in ſubſervience to underſtanding. When this ſubordination is perverted, and taſte is principally regarded, erroneous theories are introduced: Imagination is ſubſtituted for reaſon; prejudice ſupplies the place of evidence; plauſible fables are embraced inſtead of ſolid truths. An immoderate attachment to novelty or antiquity, to ſublimity or ſimplicity, has often in ſcience given riſe to whimſical principles, and diſtorted explications of the phænomena of things. To one or other of theſe cauſes

cauſes we may aſcribe moſt of the ſyſtems of falſe philoſophy that have ever prevailed in the world.

BUT taſte, when under the entire control of reaſon, and uſed only as its aſſiſtant, is highly uſeful in ſcience. It judges, not only of the manner in which ſcience is communicated, but alſo of the matter itſelf. Every juſt concluſion, by extending our knowledge of nature, diſcovers ſome new beauty in the conſtitution of things, and ſupplies additional gratification to taſte. The pleaſure which attends the perceptions of this faculty, ſtrongly prompts us to exert reaſon in philoſophical inquiries, and, with unremitted aſſiduity, to explore the ſecrets of nature, that we may obtain that pleaſure. By its approbation, it confirms the deductions of reaſon, and, by making us feel the *beauty*, heightens our conviction of the *truth*, of its concluſions. The Newtonian theory is not more ſatisfying to the underſtanding, by the juſt reaſonings on which it is founded, than agreeable to taſte, by its ſimplicity and elegance. As the operations of taſte are quick, and almoſt inſtantaneous, it is ſometimes diſguſted with the bungling appearance of principles, and leads us to ſuſpect them, before reaſon has had time to diſcover where the falſehood lies. A king of Spain, who had made conſiderable progreſs

in aſtronomy, is ſaid to have been highly diſguſted with the confuſion and perplexity in which the Ptolemaic ſyſtem involves the motions of the celeſtial bodies. His *reaſon* ſubmitted to that hypotheſis; but his *taſte* diſliked it. Inſtead of cenſuring the conſtitution of nature, he ſhould have ſuſpected the explication which repreſented it as irregular, and ill contrived. When the mundane ſyſtem is truly explained, it appears to be adjuſted with the niceſt regularity and proportion; the ſenſe of which at once confirms the theory, and fills us with admiration of the ſupreme wiſdom.

SECT.

SECT. V.

Of the Pleaſures of Taſte.

THE obſervations which we have made concerning the ſubjects of taſte, not only aſcertain its genuine province, but likewiſe, in ſome meaſure, evince its extenſive utility and importance. It will not, however, be improper to complete our view of its advantages, by conſidering its effects, both immediate and remote.

IT is the *immediate* ſource of pleaſures, not only innocent, but elegant and noble. The powers of imagination are a ſtriking inſtance of the munificence of our creator, who has furniſhed us, not only with thoſe faculties which are neceſſary for the preſervation of our being, but with ſuch alſo as may fit us for receiving a rich variety of enjoyment. And by the improvement of theſe powers, our pleaſures may be ſtill farther multiplied, and rendered more exquiſite. A fine taſte qualifies a man for enjoyments to which others are perfect ſtrangers, and enables him to derive entertainment from almoſt every thing in art or nature. It enlarges his ſphere of happineſs, by yielding delights which employ the mind

mind without fatiguing it, and gratify without cloying.

THE pleaſures of taſte, though leſs improving than ſuch as are intellectual, are often as great, generally more rapturous, always more univerſally attainable. We need but attend, and they are infuſed by every object, without labour or expence of thought. The beauties of nature are open to all: and though few can have the *property*, moſt men may have the *enjoyment*, of many of the wonders of art. The improvement of taſte is eaſier, and more certain, than that of reaſon. Some are indeed incapable of the higheſt perfection of it: but few are ſo entirely deſtitute of the natural ſeeds of it, as not to receive ſome pleaſure from its proper objects. Though all cannot attain ſuch *juſtneſs* of diſcernment as may qualify them for being judges, or gain them authority as critics; there are ſcarce any who may not acquire the *ſenſibility* that is requiſite for their own gratification.

THE pleaſures of taſte are not, like the gratifications of external ſenſe, followed by uneaſineſs or ſatiety, nor reflected upon with diſſatisfaction. They are confeſſedly of an higher order. A reliſh for them adds dignity to a character, and commands no inconſiderable degree of eſteem. A man who devotes

votes a conſiderable part of his time to the gratification of ſenſe, is an object of contempt or indignation: but a perſon who can fill up with pleaſures of taſte, thoſe parts of life that afford no opportunities for ſocial offices, who can find entertainment for many hours in a gallery of pictures, or in a collection of poems, is eſteemed on this very account. Juſtneſs of taſte procures an author as high a degree of reputation, as the moſt curious abſtract diſquiſitions. Ariſtotle's critical works are more generally valued than his logic. To the latter he owed the veneration of his implicit followers; a veneration which free inquiry has already extinguiſhed: but on account of the former, all ages will probably admire him.

THE ſentiments of taſte ſpread a luſtre over moſt of our enjoyments. The pleaſures of ſenſe and the external decorations of life would be inſipid and deſpicable to every man of underſtanding, if ideas of elegance and magnificence, derived from taſte, were not aſſociated with them. Taſte ſtamps a value upon riches, as the procuring of its gratifications is the great end for which they are deſired, and the worthieſt uſe to which they can be applied, the execution of benevolent and virtuous deſigns alone excepted.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of the Effects of Taſte on the Character and Paſſions.

THE more remote advantages of taſte ariſe from the influence which it has on the paſſions and the character.

THE paſſions, as well as taſte, depend for their production on the *imagination*; and may therefore reaſonably be expected to bear ſome analogy to it. Were it proper to enter on a full diſcuſſion of the origin of the paſſions, it might be ſhown, not only that they derive their exiſtence, their particular turn, and their various degrees of ſtrength, from the operations of fancy, but alſo that they owe them, in many inſtances, to the very ſame operations of fancy which produce the ſentiments of taſte. Fancy forms the pictures which affect taſte, by compounding ſeveral diſtinct ideas into one whole; and theſe ſame pictures excite the paſſions. *Aſſociation* has a very great influence on taſte; and every philoſopher who has examined the affections with tolerable care, has remarked the great dependence which they have on aſſociation. Many of them ariſe from *ſympathy*;

pathy; and this principle is likewiſe the ſource of many ſentiments of taſte. Both our ſentiments and our affections are often rendered more intenſe by the mixture of concomitant emotions. A ſtrong imagination produces a vigorous and lively taſte; and it is always attended with keen and ardent paſſions.

Thus taſte and affection are effects of the ſame cauſe, ſtreams iſſuing from the ſame fountain; and muſt therefore be in a conſiderable meaſure ſimilar. They likewiſe mutually influence one another, and hence derive a farther ſimilarity. We have remarked already, that the prevailing paſſion often enlivens the ſenſations of taſte, and determines its particular form. Taſte as often augments the vigour of the paſſions, and fixes their prevailing character. Preſent a mere abſtract idea of good or evil, the mind feels no emotion. Mention a particular advantage or diſadvantage, deſire or averſion, joy or ſorrow is immediately rouſed. Tell us that a man is generous, benevolent, or compaſſionate, or, on the contrary, that he is ſordid, ſelfiſh, or hard-hearted, this general account of his character is too indefinite to excite either love or hatred. Rehearſe a ſeries of actions in which theſe characters have been diſplayed, immediately the ſtory draws out

out the affections correſpondent. It is only a perception enlivened by fancy, that affects our active powers. A very general idea is ſo unſtable, that fancy cannot lay hold of it: but when a particular idea is preſented, the imagination dwells upon it, cloaths it with a variety of circumſtances, runs from it to other ideas that are connected with it, and finiſhes ſuch a picture of the object repreſented by that idea, as will infallibly produce a ſuitable affection. Now, if we examine the colours which imagination throws upon our ideas, in order to enable them to excite the paſſions, we ſhall find, that the greateſt part of them are extracted from the ſentiments of taſte. Honours have a great influence on moſt men; but greateſt on thoſe whoſe taſte is of ſuch a nature as to give them a high reliſh of the magnificence and pomp which the poſſeſſion of honours naturally procures. There is ſcarce any quality that recommends a perſon more ſtrongly to our friendſhip, than a fitneſs for gratifying our taſte in ſome way or other. A genius for muſic or painting will ſometimes more ſpeedily and certainly introduce a ſtranger to the notice or good offices of a man who is a tolerable judge in theſe arts, than more important accompliſhments of which he is equally qualified to judge. A ſenſe of beauty has generally much greater influence upon the amorous paſſion,

than

than the mere appetite for ſenſual pleaſure; and is ſometimes ſo powerful, as even to overbalance, in our choice, the natural approbation of agreeable mental qualities. An elegant entertainment is prepared, not to ſatisfy hunger, but to pleaſe fancy. We may perhaps venture to aſſert, that every appetite and paſſion in our nature, except avarice alone, or the love of money for the ſake of hoarding, derives its origin and its vigour, in a great meaſure, from thoſe ideas which imagination borrows from taſte, and aſſociates with the object of that paſſion. This being the caſe, the paſſions will naturally receive one tincture or other, in every man, according to the particular conſtitution of his taſte.

We find, by experience, ſuch a connexion between the taſtes and the paſſions of men, as theſe obſervations would lead us to expect. Great ſenſibility of taſte is generally accompanied with lively paſſions. Women have always been conſidered as poſſeſſing both in a more eminent degree than men. Quickneſs of taſte is eſſential to poetic genius; and Horace has aſſigned to poets the correſpondent turn of paſſion, when he characteriſes them *genus irritabile*. A groſs, uncultivated taſte produces a groſſneſs and indelicacy of paſſion: but where-ever a delicate taſte prevails, it beſtows a certain refinement and ele-

gance on our principles of action, which makes us deſpiſe many objects as groſs and coarſe which vulgar minds purſue with ardour; and even when we are attached to the very ſame things with other men, it gives a peculiar politeneſs to our manner of affecting them. Savages have a groſſneſs both of taſte and of paſſion, which diſtinguiſhes them from civilized nations. The vulgar in every nation are diſtinguiſhed by the ſame circumſtance from the polite. Whatever quality gives a tincture to the taſte of a nation, is found to tinge alſo the national character. The French have a peculiar delicacy of taſte: and a peculiar vivacity and elegance runs through their manners. The irregularity and boldneſs of the Engliſh taſte correſponds exactly with the general ſpirit of the nation. The ſtatelineſs which the Spaniards affect in their behaviour, is analogous to the loftineſs which they approve in compoſition. It is no difficult matter to trace a like connexion between taſte and character in individuals.

THIS connexion may be owing, in ſome meaſure, to the influence which the paſſions have on taſte. But it can ſcarce be doubted, that it ariſes as frequently from the tincture which taſte gives to the paſſions; eſpecially when we recollect, that the ideas which excite

cite the paſſions are, in a great meaſure, derived from the ſentiments of taſte.

If it ſhould farther appear, that a juſt and well-regulated taſte has a peculiar tendency to confirm virtuous affections and principles, its importance would be ſtill more conſpicuous. Thoſe who have inquired, whether it has this tendency, ſeem to have run into extremes. Some repreſent thoſe qualities in actions and affections which excite our moral approbation, as the ſame with thoſe qualities which, in a picture, or a poem, produce the gratification of taſte; and think that it is the ſame faculty which is pleaſed in both caſes *. But experience will ſcarce ſupport this opinion. A taſte for the fine arts, and a high ſenſe of virtue, which, on this hypotheſis, would be the ſame, are often ſeparated: and a careful examination of the moral faculty, would probably lead us to derive it from other principles than thoſe from which taſte has been explained. There ſeems, however, to be as little reaſon for determining, with others, that taſte has no influence upon morality †. It may be ſepa-

* This is often aſſerted, or very plainly inſinuated, by Lord Shafteſbury. See *Characteriſtics*, *paſſim*.

† This opinion is maintained by Mr Brown, *Eſſay on Characteriſtics*, § 7.

rated from virtue; it may accidentally lead men to act viciously, for its gratification: but, that it is naturally more favourable to virtue than to vice, may be inferred from many of the acknowledged qualities of the human mind.

MOST wrong passions may be traced up to some perversion of taste which produces them, by leading us to misapprehend their objects. It would be almost superfluous to undertake a formal proof, that luxury, prodigality, ambition, arise chiefly from this cause. And it is evident, that if taste were perfectly formed, so as to discover that it is a false beauty or sublimity, or at least an inferior species, that belongs to these vices, or their objects; and if it were accustomed to the purer and nobler subjects about which it may be employed, those ideas which now mislead so many, must lose a great part of their influence upon them. Vice is often promoted by taste ill formed or wrong applied: let taste be rendered correct and just, vice will be almost extinguished; for our opinions of things will be, in most cases, true, and suited to their natures.

A MAN who is acquainted with high and noble pleasures, naturally despises such as are far inferior. A relish for the gratifications of

of taſte will enable a man, in ſome degree, to undervalue the pleaſures of ſenſe, and to diſregard the calls of appetite, which are the greateſt obſtructions to the prevalence of good affections. A man of an improved taſte puts very little value on ſenſual delights, except ſo far as they come to him recommended by an opinion of elegance. And it has been already obſerved, that a perfectly juſt taſte would enable him to ſtrip this recommendation, in a great meaſure, of its force.

ANY ſentiment, or affection, which is ſuitable to the prevailing bias of the mind, will derive peculiar ſtrength from that bias. A juſt and elegant taſte, frequently employed, puts the mind into an habitual diſpoſition, more congruous to the agreeable feeling, and gentle impulſes, of kind affection, than to the more tumultuous agitations of the rougher paſſions. The exerciſe of taſte begets ſerenity and ſatisfaction. When theſe prevail, the mind is prone to benevolence. This affection finds the mind already in a temper ſuited to it; and it ſtrikes deep its roots, as in a ſoil which ſupplies it with its natural nouriſhment, in great abundance. A man is ſeldom better diſpoſed to friendſhip, generoſity, love, and the whole train of kind affections, than when his mind has been ſoftened,

by the charms of muſic, painting, or poetry. It is univerſally acknowledged, that theſe arts, when properly applied, are very powerful in recommending virtue. And their power ariſes, in a great meaſure, from the circumſtances which we are now conſidering. Their immediate gratifications, by producing a congruous diſpoſition, prepare the mind for being deeply impreſſed with the moral ſentiments and affections which they are fitted to inſinuate.

ALL the principles of the human mind have ſo near a connexion, that one of them can ſcarce be conſiderably altered, but it produces a ſimilar alteration in the reſt. A vigorous taſte, not only is affected with every the minuteſt object, directly preſented to it; but imparts alſo a peculiar ſenſibility to all the other powers of the ſoul. Refinement of taſte makes a man ſuſceptible of delicate feelings on every occaſion; and theſe increaſe the acuteneſs of the moral ſenſe, and render all its perceptions ſtronger and more exquiſite. On this account, a man of nice taſte will have a ſtronger abhorrence of vice, and a keener reliſh for virtue, in any given ſituation, than a perſon of dull organs can have, in the ſame circumſtances. Hence it proceeds in part, that many actions are reckoned either virtuous or vicious by civilized nations, which

to

to ſavages appear perfectly indifferent. This may rather be aſcribed to an elegance of taſte gradually introduced by ſociety, than to any peculiar diſpoſition to virtue. The moral ſenſe is, in ſavages, ſo dull, that the qualities of theſe actions are imperceptible to them, and their ſentiments in other inſtances are weak in proportion. Civilized nations have delicacy ſufficient to perceive moral qualities in actions, which make no impreſſion on a ſavage; and this delicacy renders more vigorous, in proportion, the perceptions which they have from thoſe actions that are approved or diſapproved by ſavages themſelves. Thus the cultivation of taſte gives new force to the ſentiments of the moral faculty, and by this mean renders it more powerful to repreſs the vicious paſſions, and ſupport the virtuous.

It is likewiſe to be obſerved, that, though taſte and the moral ſenſe are diſtinct powers, yet many actions and affections are fit to gratify both. What is virtuous and obligatory is often alſo beautiful or ſublime. What is vicious may be, at the ſame time, mean, deformed, or ridiculous. A man whoſe taſte is uncultivated, has no motive in theſe caſes, but what ariſes from the moral principle. A perſon of improved taſte, not only has this in its greateſt ſtrength, but is capable of additional motives derived from taſte; and having thus

thus a double impulſe, muſt be more ſtrongly prompted than the other. It muſt be acknowledged, indeed, that ſome vices appear ſublime or elegant, and may therefore be recommended by taſte. But they always have theſe qualities in a leſs degree than the oppoſite virtues. Superiority to external things is nobler than ambition. Admiration of theſe vices, therefore, implies a defect of juſt taſte. Where this faculty is perfect, it always prefers virtue to vice.

IN order to give the foregoing obſervations their full weight, it is neceſſary to remember, that many different cauſes concur in forming the characters of men. Taſte is but one of theſe cauſes; and not one of the moſt powerful. It is not therefore to be expected that the character ſhould be, in every inſtance, perfectly analogous to the taſte. Other cauſes may counteract the influence of this principle, and render the turn of the paſſions, diſſimilar to its ſtructure. On this account, examples of a good taſte joined with groſs paſſions, or a vicious character, are far from being ſufficient to prove that taſte has no connexion with morals. This heterogeneous compoſition may be otherwiſe accounted for. All our concluſions concerning human nature muſt be founded on experience. but it is not neceſſary, that every concluſion ſhould be *immediately*

diately deduced from experiment. A concluſion is often ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, if it be ſhown that it neceſſarily reſults from general qualities of the human mind, which have been aſcertained by experiment and induction. This is the natural method of eſtabliſhing ſynthetical concluſions; eſpecially where an effect is produced by a complication of cauſes. This is the caſe in the ſubject of our preſent inquiry. The character and the paſſions are affected by many different cauſes, of which taſte is one. Taſte in the fine arts may appear to be wanting in ſome men, becauſe they have had no opportunities of exerciſing it on ſubjects of that kind; while, at the ſame time, the natural principles of it being vigorous, and all men being converſant about the objects of affection, it may beſtow a delicacy and refinement on the character. Affectation may diſguiſe the paſſions, imitation may render them unſuitable to the turn of taſte, habit may make them run counter to it; but taſte has, notwithſtanding, a natural tendency to influence them.

THE END.

THREE DISSERTATIONS ON TASTE:

BY

Mr De VOLTAIRE,

Mr D'ALEMBERT,

AND

Mr De MONTESQUIEU.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following eſſays, upon the ſame ſubject which Profeſſor GERARD *has treated in ſuch a maſterly manner, are the productions of three of the greateſt and moſt elegant writers, that the* French *nation has ever produced. There can then be no doubt about their title to a place in this volume; which, by ſuch a valuable addition, will contain, perhaps, all that can be ſaid concerning the principles, the nature, the characters and extent, the riſe and decline of true* taſte; *matters hitherto injudiciouſly treated by many pens, and but ſuperficially by the beſt. But notwithſtanding the merit of theſe eſſays, it is owing to Mr* GERARD's *candid and generous permiſſion, that they are admitted into a volume which was appropriated to his own excellent performance. The genuine love of truth diſpels thoſe anxious fears of rivality, which are the reſult of a narrow and ſelfiſh ambition, and not of a noble and generous emulation. Beſides, Mr* GERARD's *talents render ſuch anxious fears entirely groundleſs. On the other hand, our ingenious Profeſſor cannot be diſpleaſed, that his name ſhould go down to poſterity in company with thoſe of* MONTESQUIEU, D'ALEMBERT, *and* VOLTAIRE.

The eſſays of the two latter are finiſhed pieces. That of the late Preſident MONTESQUIEU *is an imperfect fragment, an aſſemblage of ſcattered thoughts, the firſt ſtrokes of his pencil, in which we ſee the noble ſubject ſketched out in part, and the principal colours that enter into the compoſition of true* taſte *thrown careleſsly upon the canvas. For while the noble artiſt was drawing his outlines, and gathering materials for his work, he was ſeized with a diſorder, which prevented him from giving it the finiſhing touch, and deprived the republic of letters of one of its brighteſt ornaments. The thoughts, however, of ſuch an original genius, unconnected as they may be, will be highly acceptable to ſuch as know that there is a true ſublime always to be found in the firſt and moſt imperfect ſketches of great maſters, and that the rude deſigns of a* RUBENS *are infinitely more valuable than many a correct and finiſhed piece.*

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

BY

Mr De VOLTAIRE.

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

BY

Mr De VOLTAIRE.

THE external ſenſe, with which nature has furniſhed us, and by which we diſtinguiſh and reliſh the various kinds of nouriſhment that are adapted to health and pleaſure, has in all languages given occaſion to the metaphorical word *taſte*, by which we expreſs our perception of beauty, deformity, or defect, in the ſeveral arts. *Taſte* then, in general, is a quick diſcernment, a ſudden perception, which, like the ſenſation of the palate, anticipates reflection; like the palate, it reliſhes what is good with an exquiſite and voluptuous ſenſibility, and rejects the contrary with loathing and diſguſt; like the pa-

late alſo, it is often doubtful, and, as it were bewildered, not knowing whether it ſhould reliſh or reject certain objects; and frequently requires the influence of habit to give it a fixed and uniform determination.

To have a *taſte*, ſuppoſes ſomething more than merely to perceive, and to diſcern with accuracy, the beauty of any work or object. This beauty muſt be *felt*, as well as *perceived*; the mind muſt be touched and affected by it in a lively and ſenſible manner. This feeling, however, in order to conſtitute true *taſte*, muſt not be a vague and confuſed ſenſation; but muſt be attended with a diſtinct view, a quick and comprehenſive diſcernment of the various qualities, in their ſeveral relations and connexions, which enter into the compoſition of the object we contemplate. And in this we ſee another ſtriking reſemblance between the intellectual taſte and the ſenſual one; for as a nice palate perceives immediately the mixture of different wines, ſo the man of taſte will quickly diſcern the motley mixture of different ſtyles in the ſame production; and, let the beauties and defects be ever ſo cloſely blended in an object, will always be capable of diſtinguiſhing the former from the latter.

As the corruption of the *ſenſual taſte* diſcovers itſelf by a reliſh for only thoſe delicate and

and high-ſeaſoned diſhes, in which all the refinements of art have been employed to excite a forced ſenſation of pleaſure; ſo the depravity of the *intellectual taſte* manifeſts itſelf by an attachment to far-fetched and ſtudied ornaments, and by a want of reliſh for thoſe beauties which are unaffected and natural. The corruption of the ſenſual taſte, which makes us delight in ſuch aliments as are diſguſting to thoſe whoſe organs are in a good ſtate, is in reality a kind of diſeaſe; nor is that depravity of the intellectual taſte which makes many prefer the *burleſque* to the *ſublime*, and the laboured ſtiffneſs of art to the beautiful ſimplicity of nature, leſs a diſeaſe in our mental frame.

THE intellectual *taſte* is much more formed by education and culture, than the ſenſual one; for though the latter may be brought, by habit, to reliſh what at firſt excited loathing and diſguſt; yet it does not ſeem to have been the intention of nature, that the generality of mankind ſhould acquire by cuſtom and experience thoſe ſenſations and perceptions which are neceſſary to their preſervation. It is otherwiſe with the *intellectual taſte:* its formation requires time, inſtruction, and experience. A young man, uninſtructed in the arts of muſic and painting, let his natural ſenſibility be ever ſo quick and lively, will not immediately

immediately diſtinguiſh, in a grand concert of muſic, the various parts whoſe connexion and relation conſtitute the eſſence and charm of the compoſition, nor will he perceive in a picture the gradations of light and ſhade, that harmony of colours, that correctneſs of deſign, which characteriſe a finiſhed piece; but in proceſs of time, and alſo by degrees, he learns both to hear and to ſee in a more perfect manner. The ſame uninſtructed perſon will find a variety of emotions ariſe in his mind, the firſt time he is preſent at the repreſentation of a fine tragedy: but he will neither perceive the dexterity of the author in maintaining the unities; nor that exquiſite art by which the drama is ſo managed, that no perſon enters upon the ſcene, nor quits it, without an evident reaſon; nor yet that ſtill more nice and difficult art, of making the various ſubordinate intereſts terminate and centre in one, which abſorbs them all. It is only by the force of habit and reflection, that he will diſtinguiſh theſe ſeveral objects of *taſte*, and feel delightful ſenſations from circumſtances of which formerly he had little or no idea.

Elegant and able artiſts may communicate their feelings and their diſcernment to others, and thus excite *taſte* in a nation which, without them, had never known its refined

refined pleaſures. By frequently contemplating the works of great and eminent maſters in the various arts, the powers of nature ariſe into *taſte*, and we imbibe, as it were, the ſpirit of theſe illuſtrious men, ſo as to come at length to look at a gallery of paintings with the eyes of a Le Brun, a Pouſſin, or a Le Sueur; to hear the declamation of Quinaut's operas, with the ear of a Lulli; and the airs and ſymphonies with that of a Rameau. Nay, we even read works of learning and genius with a portion of that ſpirit that appears in their compoſition.

IF, in the firſt periods of the culture of the arts and ſciences, it has ſometimes happened, that a whole nation have been unanimous in the praiſe of authors full of defects, and whom ſucceeding ages have beheld with indifference, and even with contempt; the reaſon is, that theſe authors had natural beauties which were perceived by all, while that juſt diſcernment that was neceſſary to diſtinguiſh their numerous defects, and which is leſs the gift of nature, than the reſult of time, habit, and reflection, was as yet acquired by none. Thus Lucilius, who had been in the higheſt reputation among the Romans, ſunk into oblivion when Horace aroſe; and Regnier was univerſally admired by the French, until Boileau appeared: and if there are ſeveral ancient authors

authors who have maintained their credit, notwithſtanding the abſurdities that are to be found in every page of their writings, it muſt be the authors of thoſe nations among whom no judicious and correct writer has appeared, to open their eyes, like Horace among the Romans, and Boileau among the French.

It is a common ſaying, That there is no diſputing about taſtes: and if by *taſte* here be underſtood the palate, which loaths certain aliments, and reliſhes others, the maxim is juſt; becauſe it is needleſs to diſpute about what cannot be corrected, or to attempt reforming the conſtitution and mechaniſm of organs merely corporeal. But the maxim is falſe and pernicious, when applied to that *intellectual taſte* which has for its objects the arts and ſciences. As theſe objects have real charms, ſo there is in reality a good taſte which perceives them, and a bad one which perceives them not; and there are certain methods by which we may often correct thoſe mental defects which produce a depraved *taſte*. But it muſt be granted, at the ſame time, that there are certain phlegmatic ſpirits which nothing can inflame, and alſo certain diſtorted intellects which it is impoſſible to rectify; with ſuch, therefore, it is in vain to diſpute about taſtes, becauſe they have none at all.

In

IN many things taſte ſeems to be of an arbitrary nature, and without any fixed or uniform direction, ſuch as in the choice of dreſs and equipage, and in every thing that does not come within the circle of the finer arts. In this low ſphere it ſhould be diſtinguiſhed, methinks, by the name of *fancy*; for it is *fancy* rather than *taſte* that produces ſuch an endleſs variety of new and contradictory modes.

THE taſte of a nation may degenerate, and become extremely depraved; and it almoſt always happens, that the period of its perfection is the forerunner of its decline. Artiſts, through the apprehenſion of being regarded as mere imitators, ſtrike out into new and uncommon paths, and turn aſide from the beautiful ſimplicity of nature, which their predeceſſors invariably kept in view. In theſe efforts there is a certain degree of merit, which ariſes from induſtry and emulation, and caſts a veil over the defects which accompany their productions. The public, fond of novelty, applauds their invention. But this applauſe is ſoon ſucceeded by ſatiety and diſguſt. A new ſet of artiſts ſtart up, invent new methods to pleaſe a capricious taſte, and depart ſtill further from nature than thoſe who firſt ventured from its paths into the wilds of fancy. Thus the taſte of a people degenerates into the groſſeſt corruption. Overwhelmed

whelmed with new inventions, which ſucceed and efface each other with incredible rapidity, they ſcarcely know where they are, and caſt back their eager and anxious deſires towards the period when *true taſte* reigned under the empire of nature. But they implore its return in vain; that happy period cannot be recalled: it depoſits, however, in the cuſtody of certain choice ſpirits the ſublime pleaſures of *true taſte*, which they cheriſh, and enjoy, in their little circle, remote from the profane eye of the depraved and capricious multitude.

There are vaſt countries where *taſte* has not yet been able to penetrate. Such are thoſe uncultivated waſtes where civil ſociety has never been brought to any degree of perfection, where there is little intercourſe between the ſexes, and where all repreſentations of living creatures in painting and ſculpture are ſeverely prohibited by the laws of religion. Nothing renders the mind ſo narrow, and ſo little, if I may uſe that expreſſion, as the want of ſocial intercourſe. This confines its faculties, blunts the edge of genius, damps every noble paſſion, and leaves in a ſtate of langour and inactivity every principle that could contribute to the formation of *true taſte*. Beſides, where ſeveral of the finer arts are wanting, the reſt muſt

muſt neceſſarily languiſh and decay, ſince they are inſeparably connected together, and mutually ſupport each other. This is one reaſon why the Aſiatics have never excelled in any of the arts: and hence alſo it is, that *true taſte* has been confined to certain countries in Europe.

REFLECTIONS

On the Uſe and Abuſe of

PHILOSOPHY

In matters that are properly relative to

TASTE.

BY

Mr D' ALEMBERT, F. R. S.

Member of the French Academy, of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, and of the Royal Academies of Pruſſia and Sweden, &c.

REFLECTIONS

On the Uſe and Abuſe of

PHILOSOPHY

In matters that are properly relative to

TASTE*.

THE philoſophical ſpirit, ſo celebrated by one part of our nation, and ſo decried by another, has produced different, and even contrary effects, according as we conſider it with reſpect to the ſciences, or in relation to the belles lettres. Operating in the ſphere of ſcience, to which it properly belongs, it has ſet limits to that paſſion for explaining all things which aroſe from the towering pride of ſyſtem; but entering into the circle of belles lettres, it has preſumed, on the contrary, to analyſe our pleaſures, to call before its tribunal the more

* Theſe Reflections were read by Mr d'Alembert before the French academy, the 14th of March 1757.

elegant feelings of the human mind, and to ſubmit to its examination the various objects of *taſte*. If the wiſe moderation which has been obſerved, in theſe latter times, by philoſophers, in matters of ſcience, has met with much contradiction; is it ſurpriſing, that the incroaching ſpirit of the new adventurers in literature has alſo been oppoſed? This philoſophical ſpirit, applied to the objects of *taſte*, muſt undoubtedly diſpleaſe ſuch of our writers as imagine, that, in matters of taſte, as well as in thoſe of a more ſerious kind, every paradox ought to be rejected, every new opinion baniſhed, and that merely becauſe it is new. This way of thinking, however, appears to me both unreaſonable and pernicious: we cannot extend too far the liberty of examining, judging, and inventing, in matters of ſpeculation and literary amuſement, even though, in many caſes, that liberty ſhould be utterly unſucceſsful in its efforts. The flight of genius muſt be unreſtrained, ſince it is often in the midſt of its wildeſt excurſions that it creates the true ſublime. Such alſo is the caſe with the faculty of reaſon, or the philoſophical ſpirit. Let us therefore permit this diſcerning ſpirit to extend indiſcriminately, though ſometimes without ſucceſs, its inſpection to all the objects of our pleaſures; and by that means put it in a capacity of ſtriking out new paths,

and

and conducting genius itſelf into unknown regions.

ONE of the great advantages of philoſophy, in its application to matters of *taſte*, is its being ſo admirably adapted to cure, or to prevent, that exceſſive veneration for a certain claſs of authors, which we may call by the name of *literary ſuperſtition*. It will juſtify our eſteem of the ancients, by rendering that eſteem rational, and reducing it within its proper bounds; it will prevent our admiring them in their defects; it will ſhew us their equals in ſeveral of our modern writers, who, becauſe they have followed the models exhibited by the ancients, are ſo unreaſonably modeſt, as to eſteem themſelves inferior to their maſters. But it will be aſked, Whether this method of analyſing metaphyſically matters of feeling and ſentiment, will not be attended with many inconveniencies? Whether it will not often engage us to inquire into the reaſons of things which have no reaſon at all; damp our pleaſure, by leading us into the cuſtom of diſcuſſing coldly what was deſigned by nature to touch and to inflame; and put ſuch ſhackles upon true genius, as to render it ſervilely timorous, and check its enterpriſing ardour? Let us endeavour to give a ſatisfactory anſwer to theſe important queſtions.

TASTE,

TASTE, though far from being generally poſſeſſed, yet is by no means an arbitrary thing. This is a truth acknowledged on all ſides, both by thoſe who reduce *taſte* to mere feeling and perception, and by thoſe alſo who would bring it within the ſphere of reaſoning and diſcuſſion. But we muſt obſerve, at the ſame time, that all the beauties and perfections which appear in the productions of nature, or of art, are not properly the objects of *taſte*; whoſe perceptions are leſs extenſive than many are apt to imagine. There are certain charms of a ſublime and ſtriking kind, which equally affect all obſervers; and of which, conſequently, all the various orders of mankind, in all ages and nations of the world, are competent judges. But there is alſo another ſpecies of beauty, which only affects thoſe minds that are poſſeſſed of a certain delicacy of feeling, and which remains imperceptible to vulgar ſpirits. The beauties which belong to this claſs, are beauties only of a ſecond order; becauſe objects which excite the idea of grandeur, ſurpaſs thoſe which affect us only by their gracefulneſs and elegance. The charms, however, of this ſecond claſs of objects are thoſe which it requires the moſt ſagacity to diſcern, and the greateſt delicacy to feel truly; and accordingly they abound moſt in thoſe nations where ſocial intercourſe has contributed to

the perfection of the arts, and multiplied the ſources of pleaſure and enjoyment. It is then in this claſs of beauty which is adapted to the contemplation of the diſcerning few, that we are properly to look for the objects of *taſte*. Theſe obſervations lead us naturally to define *taſte* as *the faculty of diſtinguiſhing, in the works of art, the various qualities which are adapted to excite pleaſure or diſguſt, in minds that are ſuſceptible of delicate ſentiments and perceptions.*

IF then *taſte* be not an arbitrary thing, it muſt be founded on fixed and evident principles, by the application of which we may form a deciſive judgment of all the various productions of art. The truth is, that the ſource of our pleaſures and of our diſguſts lies ſolely and entirely within ourſelves; ſo that, if we reflect with attention upon our mental frame, we ſhall find there general and invariable rules of *taſte*, which will ſerve as the criterion of beauty and deformity, in all the objects which the fecundity of the different arts preſents to our view. From hence it follows, that the ſame philoſophical ſpirit which obliges us, for want of ſufficient evidence, to ſuſpend every moment our inquiries about the nature and qualities of thoſe objects that are without us, ought, on the contrary,

contrary, to animate our reſearches with reſpect to the objects and the nature of *taſte*, which lies obvious to our examination, as it exiſts within us, and conſtitutes a part of our mental frame. The true philoſopher will, at the ſame time, eaſily perceive, that this examination muſt be confined within proper limits. We muſt never, in our reſearches upon any ſubject, flatter ourſelves with the hopes of riſing to *firſt principles*, which a thick veil perpetually conceals from the eyes of mortals. To inveſtigate the primitive and metaphyſical cauſe of our various pleaſures would be as chimerical a project, as to attempt explaining the operation of external objects upon our ſenſes. But as the origin of our knowledge has been reduced to a ſmall number of ſenſations; ſo the ſources of thoſe pleaſures that are relative to *taſte*, may be traced out by a few evident obſervations upon the manner in which we perceive and feel. Thus far the true ſage extends his reſearches; but here alſo he ſtops, and deſcends from hence, as from firſt principles, to thoſe conſequences that reſult from his accurate obſervations.

In analyſing *taſte*, we ſhall find many qualities neceſſary to the proper exerciſe of that perceptive power, which eſcape the notice of inattentive obſervers. It does not conſiſt wholly

wholly in accuracy and rectitude of judgment, however rare and precious this quality may be, nor yet in a delicate ſenſibility alone. No: there is yet, farther, a conſiderable aſſemblage of ſenſes and powers (if I may ſo ſpeak) which enters into its compoſition, and which we muſt therefore carefully take into the account. A few examples will illuſtrate this obſervation. When we read a ſublime piece of poetry, what are the powers and faculties of our nature to which the bard addreſſes himſelf? They are various: ſometimes he ſpeaks to our imagination, ſometimes to our affections, ſometimes to our reaſon, but always to the external ſenſe or organ of hearing. Verſe is a ſpecies of harmony, with reſpect to which the ear is too delicate to admit of the leaſt defect; ſo that reaſon itſelf, upon ſome occaſions, is obliged to make certain ſacrifices to rhyme. A philoſopher, then, with all his penetration, and delicacy of ſentiment, will be an incompetent judge of poetry, if he has not a good ear. He will aſſert, that the pleaſures which reſult from poetic harmony are merely chimerical; that all authors, of whatever kind their productions may be, ought to addreſs themſelves alone to the underſtanding and the heart; nay, by captious reaſonings, he will caſt an apparent ridicule upon the care and induſtry which are employed in arranging words and periods,

periods, ſo as to render them harmonious, and pleaſing to the ear. Thus a natural philoſopher who poſſeſſed no other external ſenſe but that of *feeling*, would hold it as a thing impoſſible, that diſtant objects ſhould operate upon our bodily organs; and would prove his aſſertion by ſophiſtical arguments, to which no ſatisfactory anſwer could be given, as long as he was deprived of *ſight* and *hearing*. Such is the caſe of that philoſopher who, without a delicate ear, pretends to have a *taſte* for poetry. He imagines he does no real injury to a poem, when, by tranſpoſing the words, he deſtroys their harmony and cadence; and he will attribute the langour and flatneſs which the poem acquires by this change, to the power of prejudice and cuſtom, to which he acknowledges his own involuntary ſubjection. He will never once imagine, that, by breaking the meaſure, and tranſpoſing the words, he has deſtroyed the delightful harmony that reſulted from their metrical arrangement and proportions. To judge, however, properly of ſuch a conduct, we have only to aſk ourſelves, what we ſhould think of a muſician, who, to prove that the pleaſure of melody is founded in opinion, and not in nature, ſhould ſpoil a fine air, by deſtroying the proportion and ſymmetry of the ſounds of which it was compoſed?

IT is not thus that the true philoſopher will judge of the pleaſures that ariſe from poetry. Avoiding wiſely all extremes, he will neither attribute them entirely to *nature* on the one hand, nor wholly to *opinion* on the other. He will obſerve, that as all nations are more or leſs agreeably affected with the charms of muſic in general, though they may not all delight in the ſame particular kinds of melody; ſo, in like manner, they are all, in general, ſuſceptible of pleaſure from poetic harmony, though the poetry of one people may differ extremely from that of another. It is by examining attentively this difference, that the true ſage will be able at length to determine how far the pleaſures we receive from poetry and muſic are influenced by *habit*; what *real* additions they derive from thence, and what *imaginary* ones they receive from *opinion*. For he will ever diſtinguiſh between that pleaſure which is the reſult of habit, and that which is arbitrary, and merely founded on opinion; a diſtinction hitherto not ſufficiently attended to, in treating this ſubject, but which, notwithſtanding, daily experience ſufficiently juſtifies. There are certain pleaſures that ſtrike us immediately, and that pervade the ſoul the very moment that their objects are preſented; there are others, which require time to produce their proper effect; which

are received with indifference or diſguſt, until the mind has been modified by their action upon it to a certain degree, and are then enjoyed with the quickeſt ſenſations of delight. How often has it happened, that a piece of muſic which we have heard, for the firſt time, without any agreeable emotion, has excited afterwards in us the moſt ecſtatic raptures, when, by its being often repeated, the ear has been at length able to diſtinguiſh its complicated charms, and to perceive the whole delicacy and force of its expreſſion?

This is a ſtriking inſtance of the pleaſures which ariſe from habit, and which muſt by no means be looked upon as arbitrary, becauſe they may be, at firſt, received with indifference, and have the force of prejudice againſt them.

Thus a philoſophical connoiſſeur will be careful to maintain every faculty and every ſenſe in their reſpective privileges, and to attribute to a good ear the authority that belongs to it, in deciding concerning the merit of poetical compoſitions. But, at the ſame time, he will be far from thinking, that the poet's attention to pleaſe the external ſenſe can juſtify his diſpenſing with the more important obligation of ſatisfying the reaſon and imagination of his readers, by the juſtneſs of his

his ideas, and the ſublimity of his views. As he is perſuaded that the firſt and moſt important rule of good writing requires a conformity between the ſtyle of an author, and the matter which he treats; ſo nothing will diſguſt him more, than common and trivial ideas expreſſed with affectation, and adorned with the vain pomp and harmony of poetry. A plain and eaſy proſe will, in his opinion, be preferable to ſuch numbers as derive their principal merit from their cadence, and little or none from the truths and ſentiments which they are employed to embelliſh and ſet off. Feelingly ſenſible alſo of the charms of poetic imagery, he is, on that very account, pleaſed with ſuch images alone, as are new and ſtriking; and yet even to theſe he will prefer, without heſitation, thoſe beautiful ſentiments which unfold, in a noble and affecting manner, truths that are uſeful to mankind.

IT muſt, however, be carefully obſerved, that though a philoſopher be poſſeſſed of all that variety of ſenſes and faculties that enter into the compoſition of true *taſte*, yet this is not all that is required in the matter now under conſideration; it is farther neceſſary, that the exerciſe of theſe faculties be not too much confined to one particular ſet of objects. The famous Malebranche could not read the

moſt ſublime verſes without a certain wearineſs and diſguſt; and yet his ſtyle abounds with all the grand characters of poetry, and is full of imagination, ſentiment, and harmony: but his imagination, entirely occupied about matters purely intellectual, confined its energy to the creation of philoſophical ſyſtems; and the high degree of feeling and vivacity with which he was endued, only ſerved to make him embrace with ardour, as truth, what was no more than mere hypotheſis. Though his proſe was extremely harmonious, yet poetical harmony had no charms to him; which may perhaps be owing to one of the following reaſons: either that the ſenſibility of his ear was confined to the harmony of proſe; or that a mechanical and natural talent enabled him to write harmonious proſe without his perceiving it, juſt as his imagination had ſerved him in philoſophy without his knowledge, or as a muſical inſtrument produces, without conſciouſneſs, well-proportioned ſounds.

It is not only to a want of delicacy in the mind, or of ſenſibility in the external organs of perception, that we are to impute all erroneous judgments in matters of *taſte*. The pleaſure we receive from any excellent production of art, is, or may be derived from different ſources. The true philoſophical

analyſis

analyſis conſiſts, therefore, in diſtinguiſhing well theſe various ſources, and keeping them ſeparate from each other, that ſo we may refer to each what properly belongs to it, and may not attribute our pleaſures to cauſes that have had no ſort of influence in their production. It has been obſerved, that the rules of each art ſhould be taken from the moſt excellent compoſitions which each reſpective art has furniſhed; and the obſervation is undoubtedly juſt. It is not however by the confuſed aggregate of pleaſure, by the collective reſult of the agreeable perceptions, which theſe compoſitions have produced in us, that we are to fix the rules of *taſte*; but by that reflex act of the mind, which enables us to diſtinguiſh the particular paſſages that excited in us delightful ſenſations, from thoſe which were only deſigned as ſhades in the piece, or as reſting-places for the exhauſted attention of the reader, and alſo from thoſe where the author has exhibited marks of involuntary negligence. For want of obſerving this method, the imagination, warmed by certain beauties of the nobleſt kind, which may ſhine forth in a work, otherwiſe full of the moſt monſtrous defects, will gradually become inſenſible of theſe defects; nay, will tranſform them into beauties, and conduct us at length to that ſtupid enthuſiaſm, which, by admiring every thing indiſcriminately, per-

ceives, or rather feels, nothing truly. Thus, by a confuſed and mechanical impreſſion, many will be led either to eſtabliſh falſe rules of *taſte*, or, what is equally pernicious, to ſubſtitute arbitrary notions in the place of fixed principles, to contract the ſphere of the arts, to preſcribe bounds to our pleaſures in order to render them inſipidly uniform, and to confine the efforts of genius and induſtry within a narrow circle.

It is the province of philoſophy to break theſe inglorious bonds aſunder; but ſhe cannot be too circumſpect in the choice of the arms by which this noble deliverance is to be accompliſhed. The late Monſ. De la Motte maintained, that verſification was not eſſential to dramatical compoſitions; but to prove an opinion ſo ſuſceptible of a rational defence, he injudiciouſly lanched into paradox, wrote againſt poetry in general, and thereby did nothing but injury to his cauſe. He might as well have wrote againſt muſic of every kind, in order to prove, that the chorus is not eſſential to tragedy. This ingenious writer was under no neceſſity of combating the prejudices of the public againſt his opinion, by ſuch ſenſeleſs paradoxes. There was, methinks, a much ſhorter way of proving his point; and that was, to have compoſed his celebrated tragedy of *Inés de Caſtro* in proſe. The affect-

ing

ing nature of a ſubject ſo tenderly intereſting, ſhould have encouraged him to venture upon this innovation; and thus the theatre would have been enriched with a new ſpecies of dramatic poetry. But an ambitious deſire of being diſtinguiſhed from the croud, leads men ſometimes to combat, in theory, received opinions, while a timorous ſelf-love, that dreads all new and dangerous attempts, through the apprehenſion of miſcarrying, obliges them to follow thoſe very opinions in practice. It is here that we may obſerve a conſiderable difference between the philoſopher and the legiſlator: the latter diſpenſes, in his private conduct, with the laws which he impoſes upon others; while the philoſopher obſerves in his works the rules which he condemns in his preface.

THE two ſources of error which we have been hitherto conſidering, *viz.* the want of ſenſibility, on the one hand, and the want of that reflection which is requiſite to diſtinguiſh the true cauſes of our pleaſures, on the other, will be the occaſion of perpetuating that tedious controverſy, ſo often renewed, and ſo injudiciouſly carried on, the merit of the ancients. Their advocates, under the impulſe of an enthuſiaſtic admiration, are too prone to exalt their productions upon the whole, on account of the ſtriking beauties that

that appear in ſome of the parts; while their adverſaries refuſe thoſe applauſes that are due to the parts, on account of the defects that appear in the whole.

THERE is, however, another error into which the philoſophical critic is more liable to fall, and to avoid which, he muſt conſequently employ his principal attention. This error conſiſts in applying to the peculiar objects of *taſte*, principles, which, though true in themſelves, yet have no relation to theſe objects. Every one is acquainted with thoſe lines in the tragedy of the Horatii,

Que vouliez vous qu'il fit contre trois? Qu'il mourut.
Ou qu'un beau deſeſpoir alors le ſecurût *.

The

* To enable thoſe who don't underſtand the French language to enter into the true ſpirit of this ingenious criticiſm, it will be proper to obſerve, that in Corneille's tragedy of the *Horatii*, a meſſenger arrives to inform the old Horatius, that two of his ſons were killed, and that the third was flying from the three Curatii. The venerable old man is filled with indignation at the conduct of his remaining ſon. The meſſenger, to excuſe him, addreſſes himſelf thus to the incenſed father: "What other "reſource had he than flight, overpowered, as he was, by "three combatants?" "A glorious death," replies the old Horatius, "or that ſuccour that is adminiſtered by "a noble deſpair." Theſe words, *A glorious death*, which

are

The heroic expreſſion of the aged father, *Qu'il mourut*, has been juſtly and univerſally admired; and the following verſe as juſtly and univerſally condemned; and yet the common principles of metaphyſics will furniſh arguments, or rather ſophiſms, to juſtify this verſe againſt all the rules of true *taſte*. It will be alledged, for inſtance, that this ſecond verſe is neceſſary to expreſs all the feelings that paſſed in the mind of the old Horatius: for though it was his duty to prefer the death of his ſon to a life of diſhonour; yet it was ſtill more natural to wiſh, that his ſon might eſcape by the means of his valour; and that, animated by a *noble deſpair*, he might ſtand alone againſt his three adverſaries, and return victorious from the combat. This defence, however plauſible upon metaphyſical principles, is abſolutely miſapplied in the caſe before us, where the queſtion is not concerning the mere expreſſion of truth and nature, but concerning ſuch expreſſions of both as are ſtriking and ſublime. According to the reaſoning of the metaphyſical critic, the ſecond verſe, as it contains the ſentiment that is the moſt natural of the two, ſhould

are equivalent to *Qu'il mourut*, conclude the firſt line in the French, and give us a ſtriking inſtance of the true ſublime. What follows is cenſured by Mr D'Alembert for the excellent reaſons offered in his elegant obſervations on this paſſage.

have

have preceded the firſt, which, by that means, would have loſt the greateſt part of its force. Beſides, nothing more feeble, flat, and frigid, than this ſecond verſe, even when reſtored to its true and natural place. For where is the neceſſity for the old Horatius's expreſſing the deſire which that verſe contains? Will not every one ſuppoſe, without difficulty, that it would have been infinitely more rejoicing to him to have ſeen his ſon living, and crowned with victory, than falling a victim to the ſuperior force of his enemies? The poet then had no occaſion to expreſs a deſire which every one muſt ſuppoſe. The only ſentiment which ſuited that violent ſtate of emotion in which the venerable old man now was, the only affection which was proper to be diſcovered upon ſuch an occaſion, and in circumſtances, where the glory of his country and of his name were immediately concerned, was that heroic courage which engaged him to chuſe for his ſon a noble death rather than a life of diſhonour and infamy. The cold and tardy reaſonings of ſlow and phlegmatic ſpirits are very different from the ſudden and prodigious bounds, which minds, nobly fired, make towards the true ſublime: the latter, diſdaining to remain, even for a moment, in the ſphere of vulgar ſentiments, underſtand much more than they expreſs, and ſoar with a rapid flight

flight to thoſe ſentiments and paſſions that carry the ſtrongeſt marks of energy and grandeur. Their progreſs reſembles that of one of Homer's gods, whoſe fourth ſtride brought him from one end of the univerſe to the other.

THUS then it happens, that, in matters of *taſte*, the demi-philoſopher (if I may employ that term) leads us from the paths of truth and nature, to which it is the province of true philoſophy to reſtore our wandering ſteps. It is therefore an injury done both to the belles lettres and to philoſophy, to imagine that they are either incompatible with, or prejudicial to each other. Whatever relates to our ideas and perceptions, and even to our ſentiments and feelings, is the true domain, the proper ſphere of philoſophy. It would therefore be as unreaſonable to confine her to the heavenly bodies, or to the material ſyſtem of the univerſe, as it would be to limit poetry to the praiſes of the gods, or the pleaſures of love. The true ſpirit of philoſophy is ſo far from being in oppoſition to *taſte*, that it is, on the contrary, its moſt ſolid ſupport, as it teaches us always to ſet out from true and evident principles; to obſerve, that every art has its peculiar nature, every ſituation and affection of the mind its proper character, and every object its diſtinc-

tive

tive colouring, and thus prevents our confounding the limits by which the various kinds are ſo carefully diſtinguiſhed. Such is the nature, excellence, and power of the philoſophical ſpirit, the abuſe of which ſhews that it is not truly poſſeſſed.

It has been remarked by ſome, that the ſubmitting the objects of *taſte* to analytical diſcuſſion is adapted to blunt the delicacy of the feeling powers, and to damp the fire and vigour of genius. But this effect is not to be feared. The true philoſopher knows, that, in the moment when genius creates and invents, it will not admit of the leaſt check or reſtraint; that it loves to ruſh forward without control and without rule, to produce indiſcriminately the monſtrous and the ſublime, and to carry down its rapid ſtream gold and mud mingled together by the impetuoſity of its courſe. Reaſon, therefore, gives to genius, while it creates a boundleſs liberty, and even permits it to continue its career until it exhauſts its vigour, and ſinks down to repoſe; like thoſe fiery courſers, which it is impoſſible to tame any other way than by throwing the bridle upon their necks. But then it is the time for reaſon to exerciſe its authority, and to ſit in judgment upon the productions of genius. Accordingly, it preſerves whatever was the offſpring of a true

true and noble enthuſiaſm, effaces, on the contrary, whatever was produced by the irregular ſallies of an overheated imagination, and thus enriches the republic of letters with maſterly performances in all the various kinds. Where is the writer of genius and *taſte*, who does not perceive, in the heat of compoſition, that one part of his mind (if I may ſo expreſs myſelf) ſeparates itſelf from the other which is employed in compoſing, in order to obſerve its motions, and to give them a free courſe, and alſo points out beforehand what is afterwards to be effaced?

THE true philoſopher uſes much the ſame method in judging of the productions of others, that he employs in compoſing his own. He begins by giving himſelf up to the high and lively ſenſations of pleaſure which generally ariſe from the firſt impreſſion that a new and maſterly performance makes upon the mind. Perſuaded, however, that real beauties gain in proportion as they are attentively examined, he recollects himſelf; extends his reſearches to the cauſes of his ſatisfaction; ſingles them out one after another; diſtinguiſhes carefully between illuſory ſenſations and deep and laſting impreſſions; and, by this analytical procedure, is rendered capable of pronouncing with judgment concern-

ing the merit of a work in general, and of each of its particular and conſtituent parts.

From theſe obſervations, we ſhall be furniſhed with an anſwer to a queſtion which has been often propoſed, and alſo much debated, *viz.* Whether, in judging concerning a work of *taſte*, ſentiment or feeling is to be preferred before reaſoning and diſcuſſion? *Feeling* is undoubtedly the natural judge for the firſt moment; *Diſcuſſion* for the ſecond; and the ſecond judge will, almoſt always, confirm the deciſions of the firſt, in thoſe perſons who, with a quick and delicate ſenſe of beauty, are ſo happy as to poſſeſs a juſt and accurate diſcernment. But the difficulty, it will be alledged, ſtill remains: for as ſentiment and diſcuſſion will not always be agreed, what muſt be done when they differ? Is it not beſt in all caſes to follow ſentiment as our guide, and hold always by its deciſion? Is it not a miſerable occupation, will many aſk, to be diſputing againſt our agreeable ſenſations? and what obligations ſhall we lie under to philoſophy, if it manifeſtly tend to diminiſh our pleaſures? We cannot anſwer this latter queſtion without the utmoſt regret; becauſe we are obliged to acknowledge the effect of philoſophy to be, in reality, what it is here repreſented to be.

Such

SUCH is the unhappy lot of humanity, that the knowledge we acquire ſerves only to gives us a mortifying view of the ſcenes of error and illuſion through which we have paſſed, and is, almoſt always, attended with the diminution of our pleaſures. The rude ſimplicity of our anceſtors rendered the impreſſions they received from the monſtrous productions of the ancient theatre, more lively and ſtriking, than thoſe which we receive, in this poliſhed age, from the moſt perfect of our dramatic performances. The nations which we ſurpaſs in knowledge, and in refinement, are not leſs happy than we are; ſince both their deſires and their wants are leſs numerous than ours, and they are ſatisfied with pleaſures of a leſs elegant kind than thoſe which we purſue. We ſhould not, however, be willing to exchange our knowledge for the ignorance of thoſe nations, or for the rude ſimplicity of our anceſtors. For though this knowledge may diminiſh our pleaſures, yet it flatters our vanity. We applaud ourſelves on account of that delicacy, and refinement, that render us difficult to be pleaſed, and even look upon them as meritorious. Self-love is the reigning paſſion, and that which, generally ſpeaking, we are the moſt eager to gratify. The pleaſure we derive from thence, is not, like many others, the effect of a ſudden and violent impreſſion;

it is uniform and permanent, and may therefore be enjoyed at leiſure.

THESE reflections, methinks, will be eſteemed ſufficient to juſtify philoſophy from the accuſations that have been brought againſt it by ignorance and envy. We cannot however conclude, without obſerving, that, even upon the ſuppoſition that theſe accuſations and reproaches were juſt, yet they loſe their influence, and become unſeemly, when they are not made by philoſophers themſelves. To them alone it belongs to determine the ſphere, and to fix the boundaries, of the philoſophical ſpirit; as it belongs only to thoſe who have wit, to plead againſt the abuſe that may be made of it. But it unluckily happens, in oppoſition to this rule, that thoſe who have the leaſt acquaintance with philoſophy, are its moſt violent detracters; juſt as poetry is decried by ſuch as have no talent for that noble art; the profound ſciences, by ſuch as are ignorant of their firſt principles; and the age we live in, by thoſe writers whoſe productions are the moſt adapted to expoſe it to contempt.

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

Conſidered with reſpect to the productions both of NATURE and ART.

A Fragment found imperfect among the papers of

The late Preſident De MONTESQUIEU.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Preſident DE MONTESQUIEU, *though one of the greateſt writers of this or any other age, was not without certain defects. The affectation of depth rendered him ſometimes obſcure; and a paſſion for novelty of thought, and analytical refinement, led him frequently aſtray. If the following* fragment *abounds with fine thoughts upon the ſources of our intellectual pleaſures, it muſt, at the ſame time, be acknowledged, that its ingenious author has advanced therein ſome propoſitions that are abſolutely falſe, others that are perhaps trivial, ſeveral that are ſomewhat obſcure, and a few which the tranſlator confeſſes he does not underſtand at all.* Theſe laſt *are given in the original French; and thus the ſuperficial thinker, who may flatter himſelf that he underſtands them, will not be deprived of the pleaſure of an imaginary diſcovery; nor the profound inquirer, who may underſtand them in effect, loſe any thing that came from the pen of the great* MONTESQUIEU.

AN ESSAY ON TASTE.

A Fragment found imperfect among the papers of

The late Preſident De MONTESQUIEU.

THE conſtitution of human nature in its preſent ſtate, opens to the mind three different ſources of pleaſure; one, in its internal faculties and eſſence; another, in its union with the body; and a third, in thoſe impreſſions and prejudices that are the reſult of certain inſtitutions, cuſtoms, and habits.

THESE different pleaſures of the mind conſtitute the proper objects of *taſte*, thoſe objects

objects which we term beautiful, good, agreeable, natural, delicate, tender, graceful, elegant, noble, grand, ſublime, and majeſtic, as alſo the qualities to which we give the name of *Je ne ſçai quoi*. When, for inſtance, the pleaſure we enjoy in the contemplation of any object is accompanied with a notion of its utility to us, we call that object *good*; but when an object appears merely agreeable, without being advantageous, we then term it *beautiful*.

The ancients do not ſeem to have fully apprehended this important diſtinction: they conſidered as things of a *poſitive* nature, thoſe qualities, or rather perceptions, which are merely *relative* to the nature and operations of the ſoul. Hence, thoſe dialogues ſo celebrated by the ancients, in which Plato gives us an ample account of the reaſonings of his great maſter, are, in our times, unſuſceptible of a rational defence, becauſe they are founded upon the principles of a falſe philoſophy. All the reaſonings they contain concerning goodneſs, beauty, perfection, wiſdom, folly, hardneſs, ſoftneſs, *&c.* are entirely inconcluſive *; as they ſuppoſe theſe various

* This obſervation is entirely erroneous: for granting *goodneſs*, *beauty*, *hard*, *ſoft*, &c. to be merely perceptions of the mind, and nothing really exiſting *without us*; yet if theſe perceptions be invariably excited by certain objects, and

various perceptions to be what they are not, real and poſitive qualities.

THE ſources, therefore, of beauty, goodneſs, *&c.* lie within us; and of conſequence, when we inquire into their cauſes, we do no more than inveſtigate the ſprings of our mental pleaſures.

LET us then turn the eye of the mind upon itſelf, examine its inward frame, conſider it in its actions and its paſſions, and contemplate it in its pleaſures, in which its true nature is beſt diſcovered. It derives pleaſure from poetry, painting, ſculpture, architecture, muſic, dancing; in a word, from the various productions of nature and art. Let us, therefore, inquire into the reaſons that render theſe objects pleaſing, as alſo into the manner of their operation, and the times and circumſtances in which they produce their agreeable effects, and thus give an account of our various feelings. This

and not by others; if they ariſe uniformly when theſe objects are preſented; they form, of conſequence, fixed and permanent relations, which render all the reaſonings founded on them as concluſive, as if theſe perceptions were the inherent qualities of external objects. The tranſlator thought this error of too much conſequence to paſs it over in ſilence.

will

will contribute to the formation of *taſte*, which is nothing more than the faculty of diſcovering, with quickneſs and delicacy, the degree of pleaſure which we ſhould receive from each object that comes within the ſphere of our perceptions.

Concerning the pleaſures of the mind.

The mind, beſides thoſe pleaſures which it receives by the organs of ſenſe, enjoys others which are peculiar to its ſpiritual nature, and are abſolutely independent on external ſenſation. Such are the pleaſures that ariſe from curioſity; from the ideas of its own exiſtence, grandeur, and perfections; from the faculty of taking a general and comprehenſive view of things, of contemplating a great variety of objects, and of comparing, combining, and ſeparating its own ideas. Theſe pleaſures, which are attached to the nature of every intelligent being, depend not upon the external ſenſes, but reſide in the very eſſence of the ſoul: and it is needleſs to inquire, whether the ſoul enjoys them in conſequence of its union with the body, or not; all that is neceſſary for us to know is, that it enjoys them always, and that they are the true and proper objects of *taſte*. We ſhall not, therefore, take any notice here of the diſtinction that may be made between the

the pleaſures that the ſoul derives from its own eſſence, and thoſe that reſult from its union with the body, but ſhall comprehend both theſe kinds of enjoyment under the common name of *natural pleaſures*. Theſe pleaſures we muſt, however, diſtinguiſh from others that have certain connexions with them, and which we may call *acquired pleaſures*. In the ſame manner, and alſo for the ſame reaſons, we diſtinguiſh between the *taſte* which is *natural*, and that which is *acquired*.

IT is of great uſe, in reſearches of this kind, to know the ſource of thoſe pleaſures of which *taſte* is the rule or meaſure; ſince the knowledge of our pleaſures, whether *natural* or *acquired*, will contribute much towards the rectifying the two kinds of *taſte* that correſpond to them. We cannot truly appretiate our pleaſures, nor indeed enjoy them with a proper reliſh, if we do not carefully examine the nature of thoſe pleaſures, and their firſt ſprings in the human conſtitution.

IF our ſouls had not been united to material ſubſtances, they would ſtill have been capable of knowledge; but it is probable they would have loved whatever they knew: whereas, in the preſent conſtitution of things, we ſcarcely love any thing but that of which we are ignorant.

The conſtitution of our nature is an arbitrary thing; we might have been otherwiſe conſtituted than we are at preſent; and, in that caſe, our perceptions and feelings would have been quite different from what they now are. An external organ of ſenſation more or leſs would have given riſe to a ſpecies of poetry and eloquence totally different from that which takes place at preſent; nay, even another contexture of the organs we poſſeſs, would have changed vaſtly the nature of poetry. For inſtance, had the conſtitution of our mental and bodily powers rendered our attention and application of mind more vigorous and conſtant than what they are at preſent, this circumſtance would have prevented the exiſtence of thoſe rules which are deſigned to adapt the diſpoſition of a ſubject to that meaſure of attention of which we are capable: had we been naturally endowed with a more perfect degree of ſagacity and penetration, all the rules which are founded upon the degree which we now poſſeſs, muſt have been entirely different: in a word, all the laws that derive their exiſtence and authority from a certain conſtitution of our nature, would have been totally different, upon the ſuppoſition of its being otherwiſe conſtituted.

IF the ſenſe of ſight had been more feeble and confuſed than it actually is, it would have been neceſſary to have introduced into the plans of the architect fewer ornaments, and more uniformity; but the contrary rule muſt have taken place had our ſight been more diſtinct, piercing, and comprehenſive. Had our ſenſe of hearing been conſtituted like thoſe of many other animals, the moſt of our muſical inſtruments would have required a quite different conſtruction and modulation. It is true, the relations of things to each other would have ſtill continued the ſame, let the conſtruction of our organs have been ever ſo different from what it now is; but their relation to us being totally changed, they would not have produced in us the effects they now produce. And as the perfection of the arts conſiſts in their preſenting to us their reſpective objects in ſuch a manner as will render them as agreeable and ſtriking as is poſſible; ſo a different conſtitution of our nature from the preſent, would, neceſſarily, require a change in the preſent ſtate of the arts, adapted to the change which that new conſtitution would occaſion in the means of enjoyment, in the manner of being agreeably affected.

WE are, at firſt ſight, prone enough to imagine, that a knowledge of the various ſources of our pleaſures is ſufficient in order

to the attainment of what is called *taſte*, and that the man who has ſtudied the dictates of philoſophy upon this ſubject is a man of *taſte*, and may judge with confidence concerning all the productions of nature and art. But this is a miſtake: for the *natural taſte* does not conſiſt in a theoretic knowledge, but in the quick and exquiſite application of rules which, in ſpeculation, may be really unknown to the mind. It is not, for example, neceſſary to know, that the pleaſure we receive from a certain object which we call beautiful is the effect of ſurpriſe; it is enough that the object produces its effect, and ſurpriſes neither more nor leſs than is expedient for that purpoſe.

All, therefore, that can be ſaid upon the ſubject before us, and all the precepts that we can lay down for forming our *taſte*, can only regard directly that *taſte* that is to be acquired, though they have a diſtant and indirect relation to the *natural* one. This indirect relation is manifeſt; for the *acquired taſte* affects, changes, augments and diminiſhes the *natural* one, juſt as the former is affected, changed, augmented, and diminiſhed, by the latter.

The moſt general definition that can be given of *taſte*, conſidered antecedently to its diviſion

diviſion into good and bad, is, that it is ſomething which attaches us to certain objects by the power of an internal ſenſe or feeling. This account, however, does not ſuppoſe that it may not be applied to intellectual things, the knowledge of which is ſo delightful to the mind, that it has been looked upon by ſome philoſophers as the only ſource of true felicity. The ſoul acquires knowledge by its ideas, and its inward ſenſes or feelings *; and its pleaſures ſpring from the ſame ſources: for though the latter be generally conſidered as the inlets of pleaſure, and we ſuppoſe a total difference between ideas and feelings; yet it is certain that the ſoul *feels* whatever it *perceives*; and there are no ſubjects ſo abſtruſely intellectual, which it does not either perceive in reality or in fancy, and which, of conſequence, it does not feel.

* There is a good deal of difficulty in tranſlating the French word *ſentiment* by any other term than that of *feeling*. The Engliſh word *ſentiment* in the ſingular number may be uſed methinks to render the French term, and I have ventured to apply it ſeveral times in this ſenſe, leaving out the particle *a*, which attaches to it another meaning in our language. But in the plural number we can ſcarcely make the ſame uſe of it, as by *ſentiments*, we commonly underſtand our thoughts and opinions.

Concerning intellectual excellence in general.

Wit *, conſidered in a general ſenſe, comprehends all the various kinds of intellectual endowments; ſuch as, genius, good ſenſe, penetration, an accurate diſcernment, peculiar talents, *taſte*.

The paſſage that immediately follows this paragraph is extremely obſcure: as the tranſlator underſtands it, the obſervations it contains are far from being juſt; but that no injury may be done to the author by a faulty tranſlation, the paſſage is here given as it ſtands in the original.

" L'Esprit conſiſte à avoir les organes " bien conſtitués relativement aux choſes où " il s'applique. Si la choſe eſt extremement " particuliere, il ſe nomme *talent*; s'il a plus " rapport à un certain plaiſir délicat des gens " du monde, il ſe nomme *gout*; ſi la choſe " particuliere eſt unique chez un peuple, le " talent ſe nomme *eſprit*; comme l'art de la

* We take the word *wit* here in the extenſive ſenſe it bears in the old Engliſh authors, and in its original ſignification, which comprehends all the powers and faculties of the mind. Otherwiſe it is impoſſible to expreſs in one word what the author underſtands by the term *Eſprit*, in this paſſage.

" guerre,

" guerre, et l'agriculture chez les Romains, " la chaſſe chez *ſuavages*," &c. &c.

Concerning curioſity.

THE human mind is naturally formed for thinking or perceiving, and *curioſity* is neceſſary to ſuch a being: for as all things are connected in nature, and every idea and object are in the great chain of being immediately preceded by their cauſes, and as immediately followed by their effects; ſo we cannot deſire the knowledge of one object without being deſirous alſo of arriving at the knowledge of thoſe that are intimately related to it. Thus when we ſee the part only of an excellent piece of painting, we are eagerly deſirous of a ſight of what remains concealed from our view, and the eagerneſs of this deſire is proportioned to the pleaſure we received from what we had already ſeen.

IT is, therefore, the pleaſure which we have received from one object, that carries forward our deſires towards another; hence the mind is always bent upon the purſuit of ſomething new, and never enjoys a permanent repoſe.

THUS may we always be ſure of adminiſtring pleaſure to the mind, by preſenting to its contemplation a multitude of objects, or even

even a greater number than it expected to ſee.

By theſe obſervations we may be enabled to explain the reaſon, why we receive pleaſure both from the view of a regular garden, and alſo from a rural proſpect, in which there is neither order nor proportion. The pleaſure we receive from theſe different objects ariſes originally from the ſame cauſe, even from the natural deſire we have of ſeeing a multitude of objects. This deſire renders us eager to extend our views, and to wander from place to place; the mind, under its impulſe, abhors all limits, and would willingly enlarge the ſphere of its contemplation, and even of its actual preſence; and thus one of its great pleaſures is, to take in a large and diſtant proſpect. But this pleaſure is not eaſily attained: in towns and cities, our view is obſtructed by various ranges of buildings; in the country, it is limited and interrupted by many obſtacles. What then is to be done? Why, we muſt have recourſe to art, which comes to our aſſiſtance, and diſcloſes nature, which was concealed from our ſight: in this caſe we are more pleaſed with art than with nature; that is to ſay, with nature veiled and unſeen. But when nature preſents itſelf to us in extenſive proſpects, in variegated landſcapes, where the eye can roam uncontrolled through

through meadows and woods, through riſing grounds and flowery plains, the mind is quite otherwiſe elated and tranſported with theſe rural ſcenes, than with the gardens of Le Notre; becauſe ſuch is the fecundity of nature, that it is always new and original, whereas art copies and reſembles itſelf in all its productions. This alſo is the reaſon why in painting we are more pleaſed with a rural landſcape, than with a correct plan of the fineſt garden upon the earth; becauſe the painter repreſents nature in thoſe ſcenes where ſhe appears with the greateſt beauty, with the moſt ſtriking variety; where the eye can ramble at liberty, and behold her in all her charms with pleaſure and delight.

THAT which, generally ſpeaking, renders a thought grand and ſtriking, is when the object it repreſents opens to our view a multitude of other objects with which it is connected, ſo that we diſcover of a ſudden, and as it were inſtantaneouſly, what we had no hopes of knowing without a conſiderable degree of attention and application.

FLORUS expreſſes, in theſe few words, all the faults of Hannibal: *Cum victoria poſſet uti, frui maluit.*

He gives us an idea of the whole Macedonian war, when he ſays, *Introiſſe victoria fuit.*

He exhibits to us a ſtriking and ſublime view of the whole life and exploits of Scipio, when he ſpeaks thus concerning his youth: *Hic erit Scipio, qui in exitium Africæ creſcit.*

He paints, in the moſt lively colours, the reſtleſs ſpirit of Hannibal, the ſtate of the nations, and the whole grandeur of the Roman people, when he ſays, *Qui profugus ex Africa, hoſtem populo Romano toto orbe quærebat.*

Concerning the pleaſures which ariſe from order.

It is not ſufficient to exhibit to the mind a multiplicity of objects; it is farther requiſite, that they be exhibited with order and arrangement; for then it retains what it has ſeen, and alſo forms to itſelf ſome notion of what is to follow. One of the higheſt mental pleaſures is that which we receive from a conſciouſneſs of the extent of our views, and the depth of our penetration; but in a production void of order this pleaſure is impeded; the mind, deſirous to ſupply, from its own ideas, this want of regularity, is perplexed in the vain attempt; its plan mingles itſelf with that which the author of the work had formed,

ed, and this produces a new confuſion. It retains nothing, foreſees nothing; it is dejected by the confuſion that reigns in its ideas, and by the comfortleſs void that ſucceeds the abundance and variety of its vain recourſes. Its fatigue is without its effect, and efforts are unſucceſsful. Hence the judicious artiſt always introduces a certain order, even amidſt confuſion, where confuſion is not the main object, the principal thing to be expreſſed. Hence the painter throws his figures into groups; and when he draws a battle, repreſents, as it were, in the front of his piece, the principal objects which the eye is to diſtinguiſh, and caſts at a diſtance, by the magic of perſpective, the groups where confuſion and diſorder reign.

Concerning the pleaſure that ariſes from variety.

IF order be thus neceſſary in all ſorts of productions, *variety* is no leſs ſo; without *variety*, the mind falls into a lifeleſs inactivity and langour; for ſimilar objects appear to it as if they were wholly the ſame; ſo that if a part of a piece of painting was diſcloſed to our view, which carried a ſtriking reſemblance of another part of the ſame piece that we had already ſeen, this ſecond part would be really a new object without appearing ſuch, and would

would be contemplated without the leaſt ſenſation of pleaſure. The beauties we diſcern in the productions of art, as well as in the works of nature, conſiſting entirely in the pleaſure they adminiſter, it is neceſſary ſo to modify theſe beauties as to render them the means of diverſifying our pleaſures as far as is poſſible. We muſt employ our induſtry in offering to the eye of the mind objects which it has not as yet ſeen, and in exciting within it feelings different from thoſe which it may have already experienced.

Thus hiſtory pleaſes by the variety of facts and relations which it contains; romance, by the variety of prodigies it invents; and dramatic poetry, by the variety of paſſions which it excites. Thus alſo, they who are well verſed in the art of education, endeavour to introduce as much diverſity as they can, amidſt that tedious uniformity which is inſeparable from a long courſe of inſtruction.

Uniformity, carried on to a certain length, renders every thing inſupportable. The ſame arrangement of periods continued for a long time, fatigues in a piece of eloquence. The ſame numbers and cadences become extremely tedious in a long poem. If the accounts given of the famous viſta or alley that extends from Moſcow to Peterſburg be

be true, the traveller, pent up between theſe two ſeemingly endleſs rows of trees, muſt feel the moſt diſagreeable laſſitude and ſatiety in the continuance of ſuch a dull uniformity. Nay, even proſpects which have the charm of *variety*, ceaſe to pleaſe, if they be repeated without much alteration, and are for a long time preſent to the mind. Thus the traveller who has been long wandering through the Alps, will deſcend ſatiated with the moſt extenſive views, the moſt romantic and delightful landſcapes.

THE human mind loves *variety*; and the reaſon is, as we have already obſerved, that it is naturally framed for contemplation and knowledge. If then the love of variety is ſubordinate and adapted to the attainment of knowledge, it is requiſite, that variety, whether in the productions of nature or art, be ſuch as will facilitate knowledge; or, in other words, an object muſt be ſufficiently *ſimple* to be perceived with eaſe, and ſufficiently *diverſified* to be contemplated with pleaſure.

THERE are certain objects which have the appearance of variety, without the reality; and others, that ſeem to be uniform, but are, in effect, extremely diverſified.

The Gothic architecture appears extremely

rich in point of variety; but its ornaments fatigue the eye by their confuſion and minuteneſs. Hence we cannot eaſily diſtinguiſh one from the other, nor fix our attention upon any one object, on account of the multitude that ruſh at once upon the ſight; and thus it happens, that this kind of architecture diſpleaſes in the very circumſtances that were deſigned to render it agreeable.

A Gothic ſtructure is to the eye what a riddle is to the underſtanding; in the contemplation of its various parts and ornaments, the mind perceives the ſame perplexity and confuſion in its ideas that ariſe from reading an obſcure poem.

The Grecian architecture, on the contrary, appears uniform; but as the nature, and the number alſo, of its diviſions, are preciſely ſuch as occupy the mind without fatiguing it, it has conſequently that degree of *variety* that is pleaſing and delightful.

Greatness in the *whole* of any production requires of neceſſity the ſame quality in the *parts*. Gigantic bodies muſt have bulky members; large trees muſt have large branches, *&c.* Such is the nature of things.

The Grecian architecture, whoſe diviſions are

are few, but grand and noble, ſeems formed after the model of the great and the ſublime. The mind perceives a certain majeſty which reigns through all its productions.

THUS the painter diſtributes the figures that are to compoſe his work into various groups: and in this he follows nature and truth; for a croud is almoſt always divided into ſeparate companies. In the ſame manner, in every complex piece of painting we ſee the lights and ſhades diſtributed into large maſſes, which ſtrike the eye at a diſtance, before the whole compoſition is diſtinctly perceived.

Concerning the pleaſure that ariſes from ſymmetry.

WE have already obſerved, that variety is pleaſing to the human mind; and we muſt farther remark, that a certain degree of *ſymmetry* produces alſo an agreeable effect, and contributes to the beauty of the greateſt part of thoſe complex productions which we behold with admiration and delight. How ſhall we reconcile this ſeeming contradiction! It will vaniſh if we attend to the following obſervations.

ONE of the principal cauſes of the plea-

ſure which the mind receives in the contemplation of the various objects that are preſented to it, is the facility with which it perceives them. Hence *ſymmetry* is rendered agreeable, as its ſimilar arrangements relieve the mind, aid the quickneſs of its comprehenſion, and enable it, upon a view of the one half of an object, to form immediately an idea of the whole.

Upon this obſervation is founded the following general rule, That where *ſymmetry* is thus uſeful to the mind, by aiding its comprehenſion, and facilitating its operations and its perceptions, there it is, and muſt always be agreeable; but where it does not produce this effect, it becomes flat and inſipid, becauſe, without any good purpoſe, it deprives an object of that *variety* to which nature has given ſuperior charms. In thoſe objects which are viewed ſucceſſively, *variety* is requiſite; becauſe they are diſtinctly perceived without the leaſt difficulty. On the contrary, where a multitude of objects are preſented to us in one point of view, and ruſh in at once upon the eye, there *ſymmetry* is neceſſary to aid us in forming quickly an idea of the whole. Thus *ſymmetry* is obſerved in the front of a building, in a parterre, in a temple; and there it pleaſes extremely, for the reaſon now mentioned, its aiding the mind to take

take in immediately the whole object without pain, perplexity, or confusion.

THE object which the mind views not successively, but, as it were, by one effort, must be *simple* and *one*; all its parts must unite in forming one design, and must relate to one end. This is another consideration that renders *symmetry* pleasing, as it alone properly constitutes what we call a *whole*, or the effect of a variety of parts that centre in one general design.

THERE is yet another consideration that pleads in favour of *symmetry*, and that is the desire, so natural to the mind, of seeing every thing finished and brought to perfection. In all complex objects, there must be a sort of counterbalance or equilibrium between the various parts that terminate in one *whole*; and an edifice only with one wing, or with one wing shorter than the other, would be as unfinished and imperfect a production, as a body with only one arm, or with two of unequal length.

Concerning contrasts.

IF the mind takes pleasure in *symmetry*, it is also agreeably affected by *contrasts*. This

requires explication, and a few examples will ſerve for that purpoſe.

If painters and ſculptors, in obedience to the directions of nature, are careful to obſerve a certain ſymmetry in their compoſitions; the ſame nature requires that the attitudes which they repreſent ſhould contraſt each other; and thus exhibit an agreeable variety, a pleaſing oppoſition to the eye of the ſpectator. One foot placed preciſely in the ſame poſition with the other, or any two of the correſponding parts of the body placed exactly in the ſame direction, diſguſt a judicious obſerver; becauſe this ſtudied ſymmetry produces a perpetual and inſipid ſameneſs of attitude, ſuch as we obſerve in the Gothic figures, which all reſemble each other in this reſpect. Beſides, this uniformity of attitude is contrary to our natural frame and conſtitution. Nature has not deſigned that we ſhould imitate in our geſtures the ſtupid uniformity that is obſervable in the Indian pagods: no, ſhe has given us the power of ſelf-motion, and conſequently the liberty of modifying our air and our poſture as we pleaſe. And if ſtiffneſs and affectation be unſupportable in the human form, can they be pleaſing in the productions of art?

The attitudes therefore, particularly of ſuch

ſuch figures as are repreſented in ſculpture, muſt be contraſted, in order to give them an agreeable air of variety and eaſe. What renders this more eſpecially neceſſary in ſculpture is, that of all the arts it is naturally the moſt cold and lifeleſs, and can only affect and inflame by the force of its contraſts, and the boldneſs of its poſtures.

BUT as, according to an obſervation already made, the variety which the Gothic architects were ſtudious to introduce into their ſtructures gave them an inſipid air of uniformity; ſo has it happened, that the variety which other artiſts propoſed effectuating by the means of contraſts, has degenerated alſo into a vicious ſymmetry.

THIS is not only obſervable in certain productions of ſculptors and painters, but alſo in the ſtyle of certain authors, who, by perpetual antitheſes, form a contraſt between the beginning and the end of each phraſe. Of this we find ſeveral examples in St Auguſtin, and others, who wrote during the low periods of the Latin language; and alſo in the writings of ſeveral moderns, particularly thoſe of St Evremont. The ſame cadence or jingle repeated in every phraſe is extremely diſagreeable and faſtidious. *Contraſts* thus multiplied, become intolerably uniform; and thoſe

thoſe oppoſitions that were deſigned to produce variety, degenerate, by perpetual repetition, into the moſt tedious ſymmetry. The mind finds ſo little variety in this ſort of compoſition, that having heard but one half of a phraſe, it will always anticipate the other. There is, indeed, a certain oppoſition in the words of each phraſe; but this oppoſition is always the ſame; and the flowing of each period, though harmonious, is yet moſt fatiguing on account of the conſtant return of the ſame kind of *contraſts*.

Several painters have fallen into this vicious cuſtom of multiplying *contraſts* beyond meaſure in all their compoſitions, ſo that the view of one ſingle figure will enable the acute obſerver to gueſs at the diſpoſition of all thoſe that are contiguous to it. This perpetual ſtudy of diverſity produces uniformity, as has been obſerved above. Beſides, this paſſion for multiplying *contraſts* has no example in nature; which operates, on the contrary, with a ſeeming diſorder, void of all affectation, and ſo far from giving to all bodies a determinate and uniform motion, gives to a great number no motion at all. The hand of nature diverſifies truly her multifarious productions; ſome bodies ſhe holds in repoſe, while ſhe impreſſes upon others an infinite variety of tendencies and movements.

IF the merely intellectual faculties of our nature determine us to take pleaſure in variety, our feeling powers are not leſs agreeably affected by it. The mind cannot long bear the ſame objects, the ſame pleaſures, the ſame ſituations, if I may uſe that term, becauſe it is united to a body to which they are inſupportable. The activity of the mind, and its ſenſations and feelings, depend upon the courſe of the animal ſpirits that circulate in the nerves; there are, of conſequence, two circumſtances that ſuſpend their vigour, *viz.* the laſſitude of the nerves, and the diſſipation of the animal ſpirits, or their entire ceſſation.

THUS every thing fatigues us after a certain time: this, at leaſt, is undoubtedly true with reſpect to thoſe pleaſures that are extremely intenſe; we quit them always with the ſame ſatisfaction with which we embraced them; the fibres which were their inſtruments have need of repoſe; we muſt therefore employ others that are in a condition to ſerve us, and thus diſtribute equally to the various parts of our frame the functions they are to perform in rendering us active and happy.

THE ſoul finds its vigour exhauſted by any long and intenſe feeling. But to be deſtitute

ſtitute of ſentiment or feeling, is to fall into a void, which ſinks and overwhelms our better part. We remedy this diſorder, or rather prevent this diſagreeable alternative, by diverſifying the modifications and pleaſures of the mind, and then it feels without wearineſs.

Concerning the pleaſure which is the effect of ſurpriſe.

The ſame diſpoſition that renders variety agreeable to the mind, is alſo the occaſion of thoſe pleaſures which it receives from *ſurpriſe*. This feeling of ſurpriſe pleaſes both from the nature of its object, and the quickneſs and rapidity with which it acts upon the mind, which perceives either an object it did not expect, or an object preſented in a different manner from that which it imagined beforehand.

Surprise is excited by ſuch objects as are either marvellous, new, or unexpected; and in thoſe caſes where we are ſtruck with the marvellous, the principal feeling is accompanied with an acceſſory ſenſation, which ariſes from this, that the object which we contemplate as marvellous, is alſo new and unexpected.

Hence

HENCE games of hazard attract the whole attention of the mind, and affect in a lively and agreeable manner, by preſenting to it a continual train of unexpected events: and hence alſo ariſes the pleaſure we take in thoſe games in which we are aſſociated with partners; for they are alſo a combination of unforeſeen events, produced by the joint influence of dexterity and hazard.

WE may farther reduce to the ſame principle the chief pleaſure we receive from dramatic compoſitions, in which we find an important ſeries of events developed by degrees, the moſt ſtriking occurrences ſtudiouſly concealed until the very moment of their arrival, all the powers of invention employed to create new objects of *ſurpriſe*, and in which we are ſometimes affected with a particular kind of *ſurpriſe*, upon ſeeing things fall out juſt as we might have conjectured beforehand.

WE obſerve, finally, that the productions of wit and learning are read with eagerneſs only becauſe they procure us the lively pleaſure of novelty and *ſurpriſe*; and thus ſupply the defect of converſation, which is, almoſt always, uniform and inſipid, and ſeldom excites the agreeable feeling now under conſideration.

SURPRISE

Surprise may be excited either by the object itſelf that is preſented to our view, or by the manner in which we perceive it, and the circumſtances under which we conſider it: for an object may appear, in our perception, greater or leſs than it is in reality; it may appear different from what it actually is; and even in thoſe caſes where we ſee it as it is, we may ſee it under circumſtances which excite an acceſſory feeling of *ſurpriſe*. Thus in the view of any work, the mind may be ſtruck with the circumſtantial or acceſſory idea of the difficulty of its production, of the perſon that contrived and finiſhed it, of the time or manner in which it was executed, or of any other circumſtances that are intimately connected with it.

Suetonius recites the crimes of Nero with a certain coolneſs and tranquillity which aſtoniſh, and which almoſt perſuade the reader, that the enormities he deſcribes excited but faintly, if at all, his indignation and horror. But the hiſtorian ſtops ſhort, changes his ſtyle ſuddenly, and ſays, "The earth, "having ſuffered ſuch a monſter to breathe "upon its ſurface for fourteen years, abandon-"ed him at laſt;" *Tale monſtrum per quatuordecim annos perpeſſus terrarum orbis, tandem deſtituit.* In this ſhort, but emphatic phraſe, the mind is ſtruck with different ſenſations of

ſurpriſe,

ſurpriſe, ariſing from a variety of circumſtances. We are ſurpriſed at the hiſtorian's ſudden change of ſtyle, at the diſcovery of his being affected quite otherwiſe than we at firſt imagined, and at his deſcribing, in ſo few words, one of the ſignal revolutions that happened in the Roman empire. Thus the mind is affected, at one and the ſame time, by a variety of circumſtances, which concur to excite in it an agreeable emotion, and to ſtrike it with a pleaſing ſurpriſe.

Concerning the various cauſes which may contribute to excite a ſingle feeling or ſenſation in the mind.

IT is neceſſary to obſerve, that, generally ſpeaking, every ſenſation is excited by more than one cauſe. The force of a ſenſation, and that variety of feelings into which it may be decompounded, are the reſult of various and diſtinct cauſes; which, however, operate at one and the ſame time. The excellence of wit and genius conſiſts in their exerciſing at once ſeveral faculties of the mind, and exciting in it a variety of feelings; and if we examine attentively the merit of the moſt celebrated authors, we ſhall find that it lies principally in this; and that they pleaſe in proportion to the number of feelings which

they produce at the ſame inſtant in the mind.

We are more pleaſed with a regular garden than with a confuſed and crouded heap of trees. But obſerve the multiplicity of reaſons on which this preference is founded: 1. Our view is leſs confined by the one than by the other. 2. In a regular garden, each walk or alley forms a diſtinct and grand object, while, in a confuſed heap of trees, each tree forms, indeed, a diſtinct object, but only a minute and inconſiderable one. 3. We ſee an arrangement and diſpoſition of things to which we are not accuſtomed. 4. We approve, and appretiate, the pains and induſtry that have been employed. 5. We admire the care that has been taken to combat and correct perpetually the irregular fecundity of nature, which, by new and undeſired productions, ſeems diſpoſed to involve in confuſion the works of art; and this obſervation is verified by the diſguſt with which we behold a garden which has been neglected, and ſuffered to run wild. But farther, we receive pleaſure in the productions of art, not only from various, but alſo from contrary cauſes: Sometimes we are pleaſed with the difficulty of a work; at others it is the facility of its execution that renders it agreeable. We often admire, in the magnificence of a country-

ſeat,

ſeat, the ſplendor and profuſion of its owner; and, as often, are pleaſed with the art which has formed a ſtriking and agreeable arrangement with little labour and expence.

PLAY affects us agreeably, becauſe it ſatisfies our avarice, and often fulfils the hopes we entertain of making an addition to our poſſeſſions; it flatters our vanity too, by a ſecret conſciouſneſs of our being the favourites of fortune, and by exciting the attention of thoſe about us to our ſucceſs; it gratifies, alſo, our curioſity, by preſenting to our view a diverſified ſpectacle of perſons, characters, and paſſions; in a word, it yields the various pleaſures of *ſurpriſe*.

DANCING pleaſes by its nimbleneſs and rapidity, by the gracefulneſs of its motions, by the beauty and variety of the attitudes it forms, by its connexion with muſic, which is ſo intimate that we compare the dancer to an inſtrument which plays in concert. But that which renders dancing peculiarly pleaſing, is a ſecret operation of the mind, which reduces all its movements to *certain* movements, and all its attitudes to *certain* attitudes.

Concerning ſenſibility.

Most objects pleaſe in certain reſpects, and diſpleaſe in others. The ſinging *virtuoſi* of Italy, for example, are little adapted to pleaſe: 1. Becauſe there is nothing ſurpriſing in the ſweetneſs of their voices: after the preparations to which they have ſubmitted, they reſemble a piece of wood which the artiſt has curtailed in order to make it produce articulate ſounds. 2. Becauſe they can never enter truly into the tender paſſion which their muſic is intended to expreſs. 3. Becauſe they neither belong to the ſex which we love, nor to that which we eſteem. On the other hand, theſe ſame perſons are not deſtitute of qualities that render them agreeable in certain reſpects; as they retain, much longer than others, the bloom and air of youth, and poſſeſs a flexibility and ſweetneſs of voice which are peculiar to themſelves and to their condition. Thus every object excites a feeling, compoſed of many others, which weaken each other reciprocally, and are ſometimes in direct and violent oppoſition.

The mind ſometimes augments its enjoyment, by the power of imagination; which multiplies the cauſes of pleaſure by the connexions it forms, and the acceſſory ideas and perceptions

perceptions it creates. Thus an object that has formerly pleaſed us, pleaſes us ſtill; and that for no other reaſon, but that it has formerly pleaſed us, and that we connect the paſt idea with the preſent. Thus again, an actreſs who has delighted us upon the ſtage, continues alſo to delight us in a chamber: her voice, her pronunciation, the remembrance of the applauſes that crowned her performance, nay, a combination that we imperceptibly form between the idea of her and that of the princeſs ſhe repreſented upon the ſcene; all this variety, all this mixture, concur in exciting one full and lively ſenſation of pleaſure.

WE are full of acceſſory perceptions and ideas. A woman of a ſhining reputation with a ſmall defect, will be able to reconcile us to that defect, and will even have credit enough to make it paſs for an ornament. The greateſt part of the women we love, have little to recommend them, but the favourable prejudices we entertain of them on account of their birth and fortune, and the honours and eſteem that are laviſhed upon them by certain orders of men.

Concerning delicacy of perception and feeling.

PERSONS of a delicate mental frame are

thoſe who, to every idea, and every ſenſation, add a variety of acceſſory ideas and ſenſations. Groſs minds receive no more upon the view of an object than the ſimple ſenſation which that object of itſelf is adapted to excite: they neither know how to compound nor to decompound their perceptions and ideas; they neither augment nor diminiſh the gifts of nature. The caſe is quite otherwiſe with perſons of a delicate turn of mind: they refine upon vulgar ſentiments, and improve and multiply their agreeable ſenſations; eſpecially in love, the greateſt part of whoſe pleaſures is due to a quick and lively fancy. Polyxenes and Apicius enjoyed at table a variety of ſenſations of their own creating, which are unknown to vulgar gluttons; and thoſe who judge with *taſte*, concerning the productions of wit and genius, have a multitude of perceptions, both natural and acquired, which are entirely peculiar to themſelves.

Concerning the Je ne ſçai quoi.

We find ſometimes, in certain perſons, and in certain objects, an inviſible charm, a natural gracefulneſs, which has not been hitherto defined, and which we have been obliged to expreſs by the vague epithet *Je ne ſçai quoi*. It appears to me highly probable, that this ſecret charm is principally the effect of

of ſurpriſe. We are ſenſibly touched, when we find certain perſons more agreeable than at firſt ſight we imagined them to be; and we are filled with a pleaſing kind of ſurpriſe, when we ſee them triumph over thoſe defects which the eye ſtill perceives, but which the heart no longer feels. Hence we find often, among the female ſex, thoſe inexpreſſible graces adorn the ugly, which are very ſeldom laviſhed upon the fair and beautiful. A beautiful nymph generally diſappoints our expectations, and appears, after ſome little time, leſs amiable than at firſt ſight; after having ſurpriſed us at firſt by her charms, ſhe falls greatly off, and ſurpriſes us at length by her defects: but the firſt ſurpriſe is a paſt pleaſure, which is become faint and languid, and is almoſt effaced; whereas the ſecond is a freſh and lively ſenſation of diſguſt. Hence it rarely happens, that the beautiful are the objects of a violent and durable paſſion; which ſeems rather reſerved for the *agreeable*, than for the *fair*; for thoſe graces which ſtrike us unexpectedly, and which indeed we had no reaſon to expect. Sumptuous and magnificent robes are generally deſtitute of that graceful air which we often find in the ſimplicity of the ſhepherd's habit. We admire the air of majeſty that reigns in the draperies of Paul Veroneſe; but we are alſo moſt agreeably touched with the ſimplicity of Raphael,

Raphael, and the graces that flow from the pencil of Correge. Paul Veroneſe promiſes much, and performs what he promiſes. Raphael and Correge promiſe little, but perform a great deal; and this is doubly pleaſing to the ſurpriſed ſpectator.

Those graces that can render even deformity agreeable, are more frequently centered in the mind, than expreſſed in the countenance. A beautiful face diſcloſes at once all its charms, and conceals nothing; but an amiable mind ſhews itſelf only by little and little, and at ſuch times, and in ſuch a degree, as it thinks proper; it can conceal itſelf dexterouſly for a time, in order to ſhine forth afterwards with a brighter luſtre, and to adminiſter that kind of ſurpriſe to which the graces often owe their exiſtence.

The graces are more rarely found in the features of the face than in the air and manners; for theſe change every moment, and may therefore every moment produce new objects of ſurpriſe. In a word, beauty is limited to a certain ſet of features; but gracefulneſs may reſult from an infinite variety of circumſtances; ſo that, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, there is ſcarcely more than one way of being *beautiful*, whereas there are an hundred thouſand of being *agreeable*.

A GENERAL rule of conduct eſtabliſhed between the two ſexes in all nations, whether ſavage or civilized, requires, that the firſt propoſal of conjugal union ſhould be made by the men, and that the fair ſhould have nothing more to do than to grant or to reject the tender demands of love; and this very circumſtance is a ſource of graces peculiar to the ſex. As they are always obliged to be upon the defenſive, they are conſequently obliged to conceal their paſſions, and many of their charms. Under this neceſſary reſtraint, the leaſt word, look, or geſture, that breaks looſe from its confinement, without violating the natural and primitive law of ſhame-faced modeſty, becomes a grace, and produces a delicious kind of ſurpriſe. Such is the wiſe and excellent conſtitution of nature, that thoſe things which, without the ſacred law of modeſty, would have been indifferent and inſipid, are rendered moſt agreeable and intereſting, in conſequence of that law, which is a ſource of delicate ſenſations and refined pleaſure to all rational beings.

As affectation and reſtraint are incapable of exciting ſurpriſe, it follows, that gracefulneſs is neither to be found in thoſe manners that are under the fetters of reſtraint, nor in thoſe that are the reſult of a laborious

affectation;

affectation; but in a certain eaſe and liberty that lies between theſe two extremes, the avoiding of which is a circumſtance that ſurpriſes the mind in an agreeable manner.

One would imagine, that thoſe manners which are the moſt natural, ſhould be the moſt eaſy in practice: but the caſe is quite otherwiſe; for, by the reſtraints of education, we always loſe more or leſs of the ingenuous ſimplicity of nature, whoſe recovery yields a high degree of pleaſure.

Nothing ſtrikes us ſo agreeably in dreſs, as that negligence, and even diſorder, which conceal the pains that have been taken, and keep out of ſight all the art that cleanlineſs did not require, and that vanity alone could employ. In the ſame manner, wit is only agreeable, when its ſallies are flowing and eaſy, and ſeem rather luckily hit off, than laborioufly invented and far-fetched.

The man who amuſes a company with ſmart ſayings which are the fruits of premeditation and ſtudy, will paſs indeed for a man of wit; but not of that eaſy wit which is the ſpontaneous effuſion of nature, and in which alone the graces diſplay their genuine charms. Grace in manners or in diſcourſe appears moſt in thoſe who are the leaſt conſcious

ſcious of poſſeſſing it, and whoſe plainneſs and ſimplicity, promiſing nothing of that nature, occaſion an agreeable ſurpriſe in ſuch as at length perceive, in the midſt of this ſimplicity, a quality which they ſo little expected.

FROM all this we may conclude, that the graces now under conſideration are not to be acquired; in order to poſſeſs them, we muſt be natural and ingenuous: and nothing is more ſelf-contradictory, than the attempt of ſtudying to be natural.

ONE of the moſt beautiful fictions in the Iliad is that of the girdle, which imparted to Venus the power of pleaſing. No image could contribute ſo happily to give us a notion of the ſecret magic and influence of thoſe graces which ſeem to be ſhed upon certain perſons by an inviſible hand, and which are entirely diſtinct from beauty. The myſterious girdle could be given to no other than Venus. It was not ſuitable to the majeſtic beauty of Juno: for majeſty requires a certain gravity, or, in other words, a certain degree of reſtraint, which is inconſiſtent with the eaſy and careleſs ſimplicity of the graces. Nor was it better adapted to the bold and haughty air of Pallas; as haughtineſs is irreconcileable with the mild ſweetneſs of the graces, and is often liable to the ſuſpicion of affectation.

Concerning

Concerning ſurpriſe in its progreſſive ſtate.

The moſt ſublime and ſtriking beauties are to be found in thoſe objects, the firſt view of which excites but an inconſiderable emotion of ſurpriſe; an emotion, however, which continues, augments, and breaks forth, at laſt, into admiration and rapture. The works of Raphael do not affect us in any extraordinary manner at firſt ſight: his imitation of nature is ſo exact, that we contemplate it at firſt with as little ſurpriſe as if we ſaw the real objects he repreſents; that is to ſay, almoſt without any. But the more we examine the ſublime productions of that great artiſt, the more our ſurpriſe increaſes, until it ariſes into aſtoniſhment. In the work of an inferior pencil we are immediately ſtruck with a ſingular expreſſion, a high colouring, a fantaſtic attitude, becauſe we are not accuſtomed to obſerve them elſewhere. We may compare Raphael with Virgil; and the Venetian painters, with their forced attitudes, may be conſidered as the imitators of Lucan. Virgil, more natural and ſimple, ſtrikes leſs at firſt view than after an attentive examination. Lucan, on the contrary, ſtrikes at firſt view, and afterwards affects us little.

The exact proportion that is obſerved in the

the conſtruction of the famous church of St Peter at Rome, makes it appear, at firſt ſight, leſs vaſt and ample than it is in reality; for we know not where to begin, nor on what point we ſhould firſt fix our eye, in order to judge of its dimenſions. Were its breadth leſs conſiderable, we ſhould be immediately ſtruck with its length; and were its length diminiſhed, its breadth would amaze us at firſt ſight. But if its vaſt dimenſions do not ſtrike us with amazement at the moment that we caſt our eye upon the mighty fabric, the caſe is quite otherwiſe when we ſet about examining it with application and attention of mind: then the eye perceives, as it were, the noble ſtructure expanding itſelf on all ſides; and ſurpriſe, gathering force from moment to moment, throws the ſoul, at length, into the deepeſt aſtoniſhment. Thus the traveller, upon the firſt view of the Pyrenean mountains, imagines, that his eye takes in their whole extent; but as he advances, he perceives his error, ſees new ſummits ariſe, and loſes himſelf in the wide and endleſs proſpect.

IT often happens, that the mind enjoys pleaſure in conſequence of a feeling of which it has no diſtinct notion, and which ariſes from its perceiving an object as quite different from what it knows that object to be in

reality. The following example will abundantly illuſtrate this obſervation. The cupola of St Peter's is of itſelf an immenſe edifice; and it is well known, that Michael Angelo, after an attentive view of the Pantheon, which was the largeſt of the Roman temples, ſaid, that he would erect a ſtructure of the ſame kind, with this difference only, that it ſhould be built in the air. He executed, accordingly, the cupola of St Peter's after the model of the Pantheon; but ordered, at the ſame time, the pillars which ſupported it, to be made ſo maſſy, that the cupola, though, in reality, of a mountainous ſize, appears quite otherwiſe to the eye of the ſpectator. At the view therefore of this noble piece of architecture, the mind remains ſuſpended between what it perceives and what it knows, between the appearance and the reality, and cannot recover from the ſurpriſe it feels at the ſight of an edifice, which is, at the ſame time, ſo maſſy and ſo light.

Concerning thoſe beauties that reſult from a certain imbarraſſment and perplexity of mind.

The mind is frequently ſtruck with ſurpriſe from its not being able to reconcile the paſt with the preſent, what it ſees with what it has ſeen. There is in Italy a vaſt lake, called *Il lago Maggiore*, whoſe borders are entirely

entirely wild and barren: but, upon ſailing about fifteen miles in this little ocean, we find two iſlands called the *Borromees*, about a quarter of a mile in circumference; and in theſe diſtinguiſhed ſpots, nature ſeems to have laviſhed all thoſe rural beauties that the moſt exuberant fancy can paint. The mind is aſtoniſhed at this ſingular contraſt, and recalls upon this occaſion the pleaſure it has received from the prodigies of romance, where the reader is tranſported from craggy rocks and barren deſerts into ſmiling landſcapes and inchanted ground.

ALL contraſts ſtrike of neceſſity, becauſe objects placed in oppoſition ſet off each other reciprocally. Thus a dwarf in company with a perſon of a tall ſtature, forms a contraſt that makes the latter appear more enormous, and the former more minute.

ALL theſe contraſts ſurpriſe; and hence the pleaſure we receive from antitheſes, and other ſuch figures, and in general from all thoſe beauties of nature and art that are produced or heightened by oppoſition. When Florus ſays, "Sora and Algidum, who "would think it! were formidable enemies "to Rome, Satricum and Corniculum were "provinces: we bluſh at the mention of "Bovillæ and Verulæ, yet we triumphed o-

" ver them; and Tibur, now our ſuburbs, " and Prænesse, where we fix our rural ſeats " of recreation and pleaſure, were formerly " the objects of our ambitious deſires, when " we offered up to the gods our vows and " petitions in the capitol:" when Florus, I ſay, expreſſes himſelf thus, he ſhews us, at the ſame time, the grandeur to which Rome aroſe, and the ſmall beginnings from which it ſet out; and theſe are two objects, whoſe ſtriking contraſt excites our aſtoniſhment.

We may here obſerve the remarkable difference there is between an antitheſis of ideas, and an antitheſis merely of words. The latter is glaring, the former lies in ſome meaſure concealed; the one is always in the ſame form and dreſs, the other changes as we pleaſe; the one is diverſified and complex, the other is uniform and ſimple.

The ſame hiſtorian, ſpeaking of the Samnites, obſerves, that the ruin of their cities was ſo terrible, that in his time it was extremely difficult to conceive how this nation could have furniſhed to the Romans the occaſions of four and twenty triumphs: *Ut non facile appareat materia quatuor et viginti triumphorum.* It is remarkable here, that the very ſame words which intimate the deſtruction of that conquered people, convey to us

an

an idea of their unparallelled obſtinacy and fortitude.

THE violence of a fit of laughter increaſes in proportion to the pains we take to ſtifle it; becauſe there is then a ſtriking contraſt between the air and geſtures we aſſume, and thoſe that naturally correſpond with the preſent frame and diſpoſition of our minds. In the ſame manner, we laugh at the ſight of an enormous noſe, or any other remarkable defect in a countenance, on account of the unſeemly contraſt which ſuch a feature makes, when compared with the reſt. Hence we ſee, that contraſts are ſometimes the cauſes of deformity, as well as of beauty. When they are introduced without reaſon, or when they only ſerve to expoſe a defect, and to place it in a ſtriking and conſpicuous point of view, then they render an object deformed. *Deformity* produces different effects upon the mind, according to the ideas that are aſſociated with it. Conſidered in itſelf, and viewed of a ſudden, it excites *laughter*; conſidered as a misfortune, it excites *compaſſion*; conſidered as a mark of ſome noxious quality, or only in compariſon with objects which we are accuſtomed to contemplate with pleaſure and with deſire, it excites *averſion*.

The tranſlator finds the following paſſage ſo obſcure in the expreſſion, that to avoid all miſtakes, he chuſes to give it as it lies in the original.

"De même dans nos penſées, lorſquelles "contiennent une oppoſition, qui eſt contre "le bon ſens, lorſque cette oppoſition eſt "commune et aiſée à trouver, elles ne plaiſent "point, et ſont un défaut, parce qu'elles ne "cauſent point de ſurpriſe; et ſi au con-"traire elle ſont trop recherchées, elles ne "plaiſent pas non plus. Il faut que dans "un ouvrage on les ſente, parce qu'elles y "ſont, et non parce qu'on a voulu les mon-"trer; car pour lors la ſurpriſe ne tombent "que ſur la ſottiſe de l'auteur."

One of the qualities that pleaſes us moſt in an author is a certain elegant ſimplicity of ſtyle *. The attainment of this is extremely difficult; becauſe it lies between the ſublime and its oppoſite; but ſo near the latter, that it is not eaſy to ſteer along its border without touching it; or, to ſpeak without a figure, it

* The French word *naiveté*, which ſignifies ſimplicity without meanneſs, is difficult to be expreſſed without a periphraſis. We therefore wiſh that Mr Johnſon would admit *naivity* into his Dictionary.

is

is difficult to maintain this ſimplicity of ſtyle without falling ſometimes into a low and vulgar ſtrain.

THE greateſt maſters in muſic acknowledge, that thoſe vocal pieces which are performed with the greateſt facility are always the moſt difficult in the compoſition; a certain proof this, that there are limits preſcribed, both to our pleaſures, and to the art by which they are produced.

WHEN we read the pompous and lofty ſtrains of Corneille, and the natural and flowing verſification of Racine, we can ſcarcely perſuade ourſelves that the former compoſed with eaſe, and the latter with difficulty and labour: yet ſuch was really the caſe.

A LOW and inſipid ſtyle is the ſublime of the multitude, who are pleaſed with ſuch productions as appear expreſsly made for them, and which are, at the ſame time, adapted to their capacities.

THE ideas that ariſe in the minds of ſuch as are bleſſed with elevation of genius, improved and directed by a liberal education, are either natural *, noble, or ſublime.

* *Idées naives.*

WHEN

When an object is presented to us under various circumstances, or in accessory points of light, that aggrandize it considerably, the complex idea then excited in the mind, may be called noble. This is more especially observable in comparisons; in which the mind must always have its perceptions augmented and multiplied; for comparisons must, in their nature, necessarily add something to their objects, either by heightening our notions of their grandeur, or of their elegance: and similitudes taken from mean objects are carefully to be avoided; for the mind, instead of contemplating them with pleasure, beholds them with disgust, and would have studiously concealed them, had it first discovered them.

When the elegance or delicacy of any subject is to be displayed by similitudes or comparisons, the mind is more pleased with the comparisons that are formed between the qualities, actions, and manners, of the objects, than with those that are drawn between the objects themselves; as when a hero is compared with a lion, a lady with a star, a swift runner with a stag.

Michael Angelo excelled in giving an air of dignity to all the subjects that exercised his sublime pencil. In his celebrated Bacchus he

he has not followed the ignoble *manner* of the Flemiſh painters, who repreſent that deity in a ſtaggering attitude; for this would have been unſuitable to the majeſty of a god. He has drawn him, on the contrary, firm upon his limbs, and in a ſteady poſture; but, at the ſame time, has diffuſed through the whole countenance of the jolly deity ſuch a diſſolute gaiety, and ſuch an exquiſite air of pleaſure and ſatisfaction at the ſight of the ſparkling liquor which he pours into his cup, as produces the moſt agreeable effect.

THE ſame admirable artiſt, in a piece which repreſents the paſſion of Chriſt, and is now in the gallery of Florence, has drawn the Virgin ſtanding in an erect poſture, and beholding the crucifixion of her ſon without ſhedding a tear, or diſcovering the leaſt mark of affliction or pity. The ſublime painter ſuppoſes her inſtructed in the grand myſtery of redemption; and therefore makes her ſupport this dreadful ſpectacle with reſignation, and greatneſs of ſoul.

THERE is no production of Michael Angelo which does not bear ſome marks of the grandeur and elevation of his genius. There is in his very ſketches that air of majeſty which we find in thoſe lines which Virgil has left unfiniſhed.

THERE

THERE is a gallery at Mantua, in which Giulio Romano has repreſented the giants thunderſtruck by Jupiter. In this celebrated piece all the gods appear ſeized with aſtoniſhment and terror, while Juno, with an air of tranquillity and fortitude, ſits near Jupiter, and points out to him a giant who has eſcaped his bolts, and whom ſhe intreats to deſtroy with the reſt. By this the artiſt has given to Juno an air of majeſty which raiſes her vaſtly above the other deities. We obſerve alſo in the ſame piece, that the terror painted in the looks of the gods is greater or leſs, in proportion as their places are more or leſs diſtant from the throne of Jupiter. This is highly natural; ſince, in a battle, the proximity of the victor is every way proper to diſpel the fears of his troops.

Here Death ſnatched the pen from the hand of the ingenious writer.

19 MH 67

THE END.